A Nun Her Friends and Her Order

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A NUN:

HER FRIENDS AND HER ORDER.

MARY XAVERIA FALLON

A NUN

HER FRIENDS AND HER ORDER

BEING

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF

MOTHER MARY XAVERIA FALLON

SOMETIME SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN IRELAND AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN

AUTHOR OF "SHAMROCKS," "LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE," ETC.

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A NUN:

HER FRIENDS AND HER ORDER.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—LIFE IN A CONVENT.

THE life of a nun, unless she be a Catharine of Siena or a Teresa of Avila, is a level life, or, if there are hills in it, they are the little hills of the Psalmist, that praise the Lord. Heights and depths of the hidden life are alike out of our view. We may see the outward graciousness, but the woman who chooses to be the Bride of Christ lives of necessity as far as heaven is beyond our eyes.

In the life of Jane Fallon, Mother Xaveria of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin, there is little outward manifestation of inward grace. A busy woman all her days, from her choice of the convent at seventeen till her death as Superior-General at fifty-six, she was busy with so little fanfaronade, that the world, necessarily and noisily busy about little things, might well be astonished at this silence about large things. The

heads of Religious Orders of women are the best examples of feminine capacity for affairs. Colony after colony of nuns go out from the mother house to strange lands, and savage lands, it may be, and at home the Mother of all keeps the threads of all affairs within her hands. Perhaps things could not run so smoothly in this republic with a president if the love of God did not make duty very sweet. Where many differing natures are bound together in a bond closer almost than the natural bond, there will need to be forbearance and patience, goodwill, kindness, and the courtesy which is the expression of kindness. It is marvellous to one to consider how those great communities work on year after year without strife or failure; it would be unnatural if it were not supernatural.

The Loretto Nuns, as the nuns of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin are called, is an Order mainly for the purpose of education. It is the Order here in Ireland which has done most to bring its educational level up to the necessities of the day; and the education of Catholics in Ireland scarcely yet runs smoothly after the long rust of penal days. Irish fathers and mothers love to give their little girls to the nuns for training. Every nun looks a Madonna, and the Madonna is the exemplar to more than Irish Catholics of all that is lovely and pure in feminine nature. The nuns make the girls ladies, if that is at all possible; for every nun is a lady, and the standard of refinement in convent and convent school-life is,

if anything, excessive. All the world of girls here in Ireland is in the convent. The nuns have the training of all classes of the Catholics; and who shall say that the fine and delicate purity of Irish women is not kept to its standard as much by this rarefied atmosphere, in which the most susceptible years are lived, as by inherited disposition?

The Loretto nuns answer the trust reposed in them loyally. Broad-minded and enlightened, they direct all their energies to the education of the mind as well as of the heart and soul. The children intrusted to them count first, even by their Constitution, under God, amid their interests. Every year they push a little farther in the direction of widened education, though means are straitened, and in the convent livery there must be something of an impediment. Mother Xaveria, at the head of her convent, was especially broad-minded and courageous of heart. Each year of her reign saw the removal of stumbling-blocks and a more encouraged devotion to the objects of the Order, as each year saw new foundations in India or Australia and on the European Continent, or wider facilities and usefulness for the old.

Much of the poetry of the world seems to me to conserve itself in the convents. There is high ascetic poetry in the resigned wills, the cheerful abnegation, the patient service, the hardship to delicate bodies, which is a rule in all religious orders. For the eye and heart there is material poetry in the nun herself

and her garb, and those beautiful dwelling-houses where

"The Brides of Christ
Lie hid, emparadised."

Then the convents. I have in my mind a typical one—its brown corridors looking through diamond-panes on a green cloister, whose roses are clustering over the Gothic arches of the windows. Here and there in a recess will be a statue, the Sacred Heart of Jesus perhaps, with the little floating light at its feet throbbing rosily like a tiny image of the Grail, a thought of prayer living faithfully day and night for a world that forgets to pray for itself. Then the brown Refectory, with its polished tables, where poor meals are eaten off spotless tablecloths, while the voice of a Sister who reads aloud a spiritual book suggests that even so material a thing as eating may be done to accomplish God's laws. In the Community Room is recreation, where the nuns laugh the untroubled laughter of those who keep the child's heart. In the summer, recreation will be perhaps in the garden, whose green spaces are used pathetically to suggest a far wider scope.

The ingenuity of a nun's garden is a wonderful thing. In such a little space there will be winding walks and terraces, lakes and little bridges, cool groves and shady seats placed to catch a view of distant hills, or an arcade of trees full of green transparency. Then there is always a lay-sister skilled in cunning devices,

and great at those shell grottoes and rocky caves where the miracle of Lourdes will repeat itself, or St. Joseph will look at one out of kind, imaged eyes. And somewhere in the midst, and full of sunshine, will lie the little graveyard, where the mounds are growing green, and an iron cross bears a name and date. There will be roses in bloom perhaps; or it will be spring, and the place golden with yellow berberis, which I remember in May was a very burning-bush near Mother Xaveria's resting-place. Thither the nuns will come with tranquil hearts, only leaving their cheerfulness at the threshold, because this is a place for prayer and intercession. With this constant tender companionship, even the grave must needs put off some of its stark loneliness and isolation.

The convents have their place in the economy of God. Those lives of toil and prayer cheerfully given must needs set the balance straighter for those who neither work or pray. My sympathy is with the active Orders; but for the contemplative, must not their lamp of prayer and love, for ever alight, speak to Jesus Christ eloquently for others, He being the great Exemplar of vicarious atonement?

In this Loretto Order the nuns arise at five. There are three hours before they break their fast, devoted to meditation, to the Morning Office, and Mass. After breakfast they make a short visit to the church. Then they set in order those tiny cells, some of which I saw at Rathfarnham, little white-walled rooms, with wide,

high windows looking away to the dove-coloured hills. The furniture is spare enough—the little beds, with their counterpanes and curtains of blue check calico, the crucifix, the prie-dieu, and one penitential chair, in which no one would ever sit for ease sake.

From nine o'clock to four the teaching nuns are engaged in the school-work, with an interval for dinner at the unfashionable hour of one o'clock. This relaxation of the body is prefaced by an examination of conscience in the church, and followed by one of those visits to the Blessed Sacrament which mark the day like white stones with their intervals. The afternoon is taken up by the recital of the Sacred Office, meditation, spiritual reading, and the necessary preparation for next day's school-work, till supper at seven, preceded and followed by the usual visit to the church. At 9.30, after night-prayers in choir, each nun retires to her cell. Lights are all out by ten o'clock. The day has two hours of recreation, one after dinner, the other after supper, during which the nuns may talk and laugh as pleases them, though the busy fingers will go on incessantly knitting, or sewing, or embroidering.

The day has no idle hours or words to be accounted for. The routine varies of course for the lay-sisters, and for the novices, who have many hours given over to study and to being instructed, so that they in their turn shall be competent to teach. Theirs especially is a life of subjection and obedience. At Rath-

farnham I saw them trooping in and out of doors like a flock of white doves, their snowy veils fluttering in the west wind. It was summer weather, and a hurried turn in the garden, full of the breath from blue mountains yonder, was vivifying in the minutes between changes of occupation; precious minutes which we in the wasteful world would scarcely take count of.

This ordered and rarefied life does not make the nun a creature abnormal, and away from human necessities and human hearts. "Did you think," said Mary Aikenhead, a great Irish nun, "that when we put on our habits we left our hearts outside?" The same plaint and protest one will hear from many a nun's lips. The wrench from home-ties often causes even years of desolation. Though the irresistible cry that comes to call them draws them through such a valley of shadow, the troubles of dear folk out in the world will oppress and grieve a cloistered heart heavily; none could mourn more passionately than they for this or that beloved one, whose dear mortal body the earth has hidden away from them. Because they do not multiply human ties is all the more reason for concentration of affection. They make many loves among the children confided to them, and rare and beautiful friendships with each other, though one wonders where in a nun's life is time or opportunity for finding out a kindred soul.

Mother Xaveria seems to have attracted especial

love and loyalty. This quality of exquisite attraction seems to me to mark her out notably. "Oh," said one who had been her novice, a young nun, talking with me in her little room above the beat of the surges in a convent by the sea—"Oh, when I was lonely and unhappy, I used to look up at that beautiful still face under the great crucifix, and it used to comfort me. Her complexion was exquisitely transparent; her eyes were now grey, now hazel, under the large clear lids; her features were regular and beautiful; the whole face shining *as if there was a light behind it.*" It seemed to me a lovely picture of the nun, who has inspired many poets, from Crashaw and Milton to lesser lights in our own day.

The nuns have such lovely names—Attracta, Theodora, Benedicta—delicate music in themselves.

Here is a poem about a nun which seems to me to hold within it the picture I have tried to paint in poorer prose. It is by Miss Rosa Mulholland, and tells of a Sister of Mercy dead long since, but living in the hearts that knew her. My Mother Xaveria was such a one:—

I know a convent gray.
It standeth above the town;
It looketh from the distant way,
Like a monk in his faded gown.

The town is older and grayer
That sitteth below its feet;
And sin, and pain, and sorrow, and care
Are dwelling in every street.

Dwelling in every street,
Yet hurried from place to place,
As the Sisters go with their burden sweet—
Bread, and comfort, and grace.

In a nook of that convent gray
She dwelleth, my tender saint:
Sweeter her face than I can say,
Nobler than words can paint.

Her wimple is white as milk;
Her robe is coarse and spare:
But never a lady in gems and silk
Looked half so grand and fair.

Her mind is a river of light;
Her heart is a well of love;
But none can look on her soul so white
Save only the Lord above.

That soul's most rapid flame,
The soul of my tender saint,
It wasteth sore her beautiful frame,
And maketh her body faint.

She stayeth her eager feet,
And goeth not oft to the town,
But up in her window, lone and sweet,
She sitteth and gazeth down.

Oh, crowded, sad, gray walls!
Oh, people who dwell within!
Little ye know of the tear that falls
Day by day for your sin!

Her town is her nested dove,
She huggeth it close and dear,
She wrappeth it round with motherly love,
She watcheth with motherly fear.

They turn the godless men,
They turn their steps, and they come,
They know not why, but they come again,
this were their childhood's home.

They turn with willing feet,
The foolish wife and maid ;
They have no fear of the lips so sweet,
That teach but never upbraid.

They come with blushing face,
And they come with tearful eye ;
And one hath trouble, and one disgrace,
To whisper when none are by.

And kneeling then at her knee,
They catch her fire, I ween,
And burning strangely and holily,
Are not what they have been.

She hath them all in her heart ;
It is deep, and strong, and broad :
And well I know with what loving art
She talketh of them to God.

CHAPTER II.

MARY WARD: HER CHILDHOOD AND GIRLHOOD.

BEFORE the Reformation the Religious Orders of women were mainly contemplative; their place in the Church Militant rather to pray with uplifted hands against the sun-setting than to go forth and fight in the serried ranks or toil with the toilers. Things are widely different now, when nuns are on foreign missions and instructing the heathen; when they are on the battlefield, binding up wounds and moistening the lips of the dying; when they look on at many a terrible operation in the hospital wards; when they nurse lepers; when they leave their convents to go up and down the streets where sin stalks heavily and sorrow and want "make a goblin of the sun," with their burthens of bread and comfort and grace. All the avocations of the active Orders of women would seem strange indeed in the eyes of a mediæval Carmelite, or Benedictine, or Poor Clare, hid away in her stately abbey. It is a note of the adaptability of the Church, which, ever the same, has still Progress written upon her banner, and is only conservative of precious things.

Mary Ward, who was to conceive the idea of an Order for the education of girls, was born at the manor-house of Givendale, "a fair manor-house of stone," says Leland, near Ripon, in Yorkshire, on the 23rd of January 1585. Those were the closing days of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and in sturdy Yorkshire nonconforming Catholics were still plentiful despite persecution. Her father, Marmaduke Ward, was, as Mary's faithful friend and biographer, Winifred Wigmore, tells us, "famous in that country for his exceeding comeliness of person, sweetness and beauty of face, agility and activeness, the knightly exercises in which he excelled, and, above all, his constancy and courage in the Catholic religion, his admirable charity to the poor, so as never was poor denied at his gate, and commonly sixty, eighty, or even an hundred in the day, to whom he gave great alms; and yet is also famous for his valour and his fidelity to his friend."

Her mother, married at the age of fourteen, had already been espoused or betrothed to John Constable of Ploughland, who was cast in prison for the faith, and died the year after his release, at the age of twenty-seven. Him, Father Grene, in his MS. Martyrology, describes, saying of him, "He might well be named John, because the grace of sweet Jesus did appear in his godly life, in his words, works, and all his doings." This marriage so-called could have been but a betrothal, judging from the youth of the little bride.

Marmaduke and Ursula Ward lived in great seclu-

sion within their park walls, as Catholics of the time needed to do to escape notice and persecution. They sheltered a missionary priest, who baptized their children and gave themselves the consolations of religion.

In the convent of Nymphenburg, in Bavaria, now the headquarters of the Order in that country, is preserved a series of forty pictures, painted by some unknown convent artist of the Middle Ages, and representing various events in Mary Ward's life, whence the series is called "The Painted Life."

The first of the pictures tells a tender little legend of Mary's babyhood—how Ursula Ward, watching her little one's first attempt at walking, as every mother since Eve has done with pride and love, saw her baby stumble close by an unsheltered flight of steps, and cried aloud, "Jesus, bless my child," whereupon the little one said very sweetly, "Jesus,"—"which was the first and all the words she spoke for many months after."

At first Mary went to live with her grandmother, Ursula Wright. This lady and her husband were more in the thick of the terror than the Ward household. The furious Earl of Huntingdon was President of the North in those years, and having received *carte blanche* from the Queen, was raging like a lion against the Catholics. Ursula Wright had lain in prison at intervals covering a space of fourteen years—once in the thieves' prison, among the common malefactors. This was for plain speaking to my Lord of Hunting-

don. Ursula Wright had at one time for jail companions my Lady Constable, my Lady Babthorpe, my Lady Ingleby—all related to Mary Ward—with many other gentlewomen. These poor ladies, accustomed to delicacy and refinement of living, suffered greatly, and were not comforted even by the ministrations of religion. They were fed by the alms of broken food, all heaped in a common receptacle, brought twice daily to the prison gates, and even of this uninviting fare there was too little. When Ursula Wright was thrust among the thieves, they, taking her for one like themselves, demanded sixpence of her before they would allow her to partake of this food, which sixpence she gave cheerfully, saying nothing to show that she was not in as evil case of conscience as they were.

However, Mary came in a time of lull, and it was a holy and happy life. She tells herself how her grandmother kept her in her own apartments, "because the house being great, she was very careful lest by idle or ill company I should be drawn to offend God." And then follows this beautiful bit: "So great a prayer was she, that in five years I do not ever remember to have seen her asleep, nor did I ever awake when I perceived her not at prayer."

There was one little worldling in the house, Mary's young aunt, whom the biography treats with great severity, though her faults seem to have been the common girlish ones of vanity and frivolity. Mary writes: "God had endued her with many excellent

gifts of nature, though she used them not to His honour or her good. This kinswoman was not much older than I; she loved me much, and I bore her exceeding great affection. . . . I was for the most part in her company. I saw her, with the help of her woman, do many things which I knew not to be well; she likewise made me of her counsel in most of her intentions and desires. . . . I was not then addicted to any one virtue. When my grandmother commanded me to pray, I sat in the place, but spent my time in sports."

A later catalogue of Mary's sins during those years sheds some light on the young aunt's enormities :—

"In this five years my fortune was asked and told several times. Once or twice, I think, I procured it; at the least, as I remember, I was glad to have it, and, according to my capacity, believed what was said. I once intended to fast St. Agnes's Fast, for the foolish and accustomed reason (*i.e.*, that one's future husband should appear in a dream), as I remember, by the speech and example of my aforesaid kinswoman, and fasted for a good part of the day; but becoming very hungry, I broke off. I once procured that unlawful practice of sieve and shears (for the detection of a thief) to be done, exercised and holp to do it myself, for the finding of a trifle that was lost. And I am morally certain that in the execution of these things I had some fear and understanding that they were sin. If in these years I remembered any one act that

were good, I would set it down truthfully, for I am to tell all."

This young aunt and temptress, the one touch of nature in an atmosphere of the supernatural, presently disappears from the scene; for, visiting at the Wards' house, she attracts a young man whom Marmaduke Ward intended for Mary's husband, and they are married. Mary thanks her "Friend of friends" for thus removing two dangers from her path. "What was there, my God, in me," she writes, "worthy yourself? Why was *she forsaken* and I chosen?"

However, this Thomas Percy was but the first of suitors to the young Bride of Heaven. After Mary returned to her father's house, they came round her thick as bees, though she was still of childish years. She was a beautiful child, "her features exquisite, her look angelic, her modesty sweet and graceful." In her portraits in later life we see under the close cap, large eyes, dark and earnest, under heavy lids—the heavy lids which nearly always mark a rarity of mind and heart in their possessor—an oval face with outlines of great purity, a straight nose, and full lips of peculiar sweetness. The other things of which Winifred Wigmore speaks are hidden by the cap and enveloping robe. Besides her beauty, Mary was highly accomplished. Her grandmother had instructed her in all the duties of housekeeping which the ladies of that time knew—the cooking, the making of simples and preserves, and all the rest of it; and

outside accomplishments, she was well versed in Latin, so that she was able to read the Fathers, and to write the tongue fluently. Also her reputation for holiness and spotlessness of life must have been inducements to love her for those noble gentlemen, each of whom carried his life and fortune in his hands, for Christ's sake.

Shortly after her return home, Mary nearly perished in a dangerous fire, which broke out on the Feast of the Purification. Seeing the day it was, she several times cried out aloud beseeching our Blessed Lady to extinguish the fire, and declaring that since it was her feast, she would not believe but that she would save them. Then in the midst of the noise and bustle, she, with two little sisters, retired to a room in the castle, where was a great oak coffer with fine damask and napery, designed for Mary against her wedding, and there set themselves to say the Rosary. And they went nigh to be burnt on their knees, had not Marmaduke Ward, missing them, entered the burning castle, and "by the intercession of the Blessed Mother," says Mary Ward, saved them. This incident forms two of the pictures in "The Painted Life."

While still at her father's, we find Mary Ward well affected towards one of her suitors, a gifted and handsome boy named Redshaw, her equal in wealth and position, and a great protégé of her kinsman, the Earl of Northumberland. She was the merest child at the time, twelve years old or so, but marrying and giving

in marriage seem to have been at an extraordinarily early age in those days. Probably, however, there would be betrothal and a long probation before the marriage was celebrated. Winifred Wigmore writes: "God having not yet prevented her tender heart with His extraordinary love, she did innocently mean this young man to be her husband. But Divine Providence having willed her for a higher state, would not let this love, though innocent, have longer place in her heart, and so disposed that this hopeful young man go to London on business connected with his estate, and so home. Also, she was seized with an apprehension of some lack of constancy and fervour in him, which yet was not really so, for he loved and honoured her greatly till his death, which took place a few months later."

During the next two years she was three times asked in marriage by various noble suitors, but none ever again stirred interest in her heart; "for it was ordinary with me," she says in self-accusation, "to hate the person in such extremity as could not stand with Christian charity." Once being urged to accept a particularly advantageous offer, she became very ill, almost to death, so that her father would not allow the suit to be pressed any longer.

When Mary was fifteen, her father and mother went to live at the Earl of Northumberland's seat of Alnwick Castle, and because they feared the harsh North for her, or because they hoped that away from the too

tender rest of home she might grow reasonable and accept one of her lovers, they sent her to her cousin, Sir Ralph Babthorpe, and his lady, at their manor-house between the Ouse and the Derwent. Here was Mary seven years in the most valiant Christian household. My Lady Babthorpe was of that mettle that she lay in prison for two years as a recusant, and thereafter was let alone because they could not bend her. Sir Ralph had also been in prison, and though bound by a £4000 bond to bring his children to church, he disobeyed such mandate. Of his household we are told :—

"It might rather count as a religious house than otherwise. There lived in it three knights and their ladies—Sir Ralph, Sir William, and Lady Palmes, with her husband, Sir George. All the servants were Catholic. On the Sundays we locked the doors and all came to Mass, and had our sermons, catechisms, and spiritual lessons every Sunday and holyday. On the week-days we had for the most part two Masses, and of them the one for the servants at six of the clock in the morning, at which the gentlemen attended every one without fail, and the ladies if they were not sick, even in winter-time : the other Mass we had at eight of the clock for them who were absent from the first. In the afternoon at four we had Evensong, and after that Matins. . . . The most of them used daily meditations and mental prayers, and all, at the least every fourteen days and great feasts, did confess and

communicate, and after supper every night at nine of the clock we had all together Litanies, and so to bed."

In this house Mary's sanctity daily grew more apparent to the holy dwellers therein. I would fain linger to recite some of the beautiful stories told of her, but I must hurry on. In this house Mary reached the turning-point at which she was to leave the earth behind and set out for heaven. Here she first conceived the desire for the religious life, and partly by the instrumentality of a sewing-woman of Lady Babthorpe's, an elect soul, named Margaret Garett. She discoursed of holy things while they sat at some task of embroidering, and Mary Ward and her little cousin, Barbara Babthorpe, drunk in the discourse with greedy ears. This was the Barbara whose grand-niece and namesake afterwards was to take up the work fallen from Mary's dying hands, and to reap in some sort the honour due to her whom God should permit to be contemned even by those in whom she beheld Him and loved and honoured Him.

She was sixteen years of age when she first desired to be a religious; she was twenty before she took any steps to carry her desire into effect. By this time she had come to be considered with great veneration by the Catholics of Yorkshire, who were indeed as one family, being bound together by intermarriage as well as by ties of blood.

In the end, there was one great trial before she broke away to fulfil her vocation. Her hand was asked in

marriage by Edmund Neville, a man of surpassing qualities of mind and person, as well as being heir to the Earldom of Westmoreland. To Mary's spiritual advisers as well as to her father it seemed surely the will of God that such a man should be secured to the Catholic interests by this marriage. There was cruel pressure, therefore, brought to bear upon her, her confessor, to whom she looked most for aid, being very insistent on the marriage. But at last, after great suffering, God revealed His intentions to this priest, Father Holtby, during a Mass said privately in the presence of Mary and her father at their London house in Baldwin Gardens. "The confessor was much alarmed," one of Mary's biographers says, "by the upsetting of the chalice and spilling of the Holy Blood at Holy Mass, and, illuminated by a heavenly light, he discerned that Mary was chosen to be a Bride of Christ." By his influence Marmaduke Ward was induced to forego his opposition to his daughter's vocation, and give up his design of marrying her. Two years later Edmund Neville became a priest of the Society of Jesus, and after long toil on the English mission, he was, in his eighty-fifth year, cast in prison, being then bedridden and past work. After nine months of bitter hardship he was taken to London for trial, but was discharged in a dying state for want of evidence. He died soon afterwards, essentially a martyr, though he died not on the scaffold.

CHAPTER III.

MARY WARD: HER WORK AND DEATH.

MARY sailed for St. Omer on May 1, 1606. It was the day fixed for Father Garnett's execution, but the martyr had protested, seeing it was a great people's feast. "What, will they make a May-game of me?" he said; for the people used to carry in the streets on this day great armfuls of greenery, and the pre-Reformation pleasures of the day had not yet been stamped out. So he was respited to the Saturday following, which was Holy Cross Day. Mary's thoughts were full of him as she sailed over the sea. The place she was bound for had a close and tender association with the martyr, for there was the English College of Jesuits, and thence issued many a one of those whom St. Philip Neri hailed as Flowers of Martyrdom.

To this English College came Mary Ward seeking direction, for her mind was in considerable darkness and bewilderment as to where God intended her to be in the religious life. Father Holtby had sent her to one Father William Flacke, the Superior of the Jesuits, but now a strange thing happened. As she

stood at the door inquiring for Father Flacke, there came into the porch a certain Father George Keynes, who peremptorily took at once her direction in his own hands. He bid her straightway to the convent of Poor Clares, there to be received as an out- or lay-sister, adding that she was there expected and all things made ready against her coming.

Then began a cruel time for poor Mary. She dared not disobey this director, whose voice she regarded as the will of God, though, as Winifred Wigmore has it, she would rather "have entered into a cauldron of boiling oil than a life of such distractions," all her desire being for a contemplative life. She was clothed after some resistance from the Father-Provincial of the Franciscans, who saw more clearly than Father Keynes, and we have now the strange spectacle of this English lady, tall, beautiful, distinguished, begging up and down the streets of a foreign town for the broken victuals which were the convent's provender. Of course she was unfitted for the life, and after many months of fatigue and exposure, hard food and want of sleep, together with great inner desolation, she fell ill, and contracted also a painful affection of the knee. However, as soon as she was able to rise, she was about begging again, up and down the hilly streets, and through that watery country, with its floating gardens, and dykes and bridges, which lay outside the walls. However, after a year of this cruel life, Father Keynes came to his senses, and called her out as peremptorily

as he had ordered her in. She left the Poor Clares worn and exhausted, having been driven hither and thither by the will of others, but at last by the Will of God being delivered from this trial.

After a time she herself endowed a convent of Poor Clares to receive English ladies who designed to become nuns, and entering there, looked to find her own peace of mind. But before her profession came, it was again brought home to her that this was not the end, and, amid much misrepresentation and anger, she alone went out from the band she had brought together, and once more went seeking God's will. This foundation, which she impoverished herself in making, prospered, and at this day has many offshoots through the world, and still fulfils its foundress's idea in receiving nuns from many noble English families.

Mary returned to England now, and resumed the secular habit. At twenty-two she was more beautiful than ever, and dressed in accordance with her rank, as was politic in the case of Catholics; but she had bound herself by a vow of chastity, and wore under her splendid garments the hair shirt, which cut its way into her tender skin. She was in lodgings in "St. Clement's Churchyard, by the Strand," at that time the fashionable part of the town. Somerset House was the dower-palace of Anne of Denmark, who resided there betimes, and the gorgeous pleasure barges of the great nobles went up and down the river, and their equipages were in the narrow streets, where the best

blood of England lived when it came to town. Mary's "extreme beauty and bewitching power" brought back now the old plague of lovers, and we hear how a person of rank sent his servants to her with "an elegant collation," which she rejected with disdain and fear, and locking herself away as from a snare of the wicked enemy, spent the night praying against temptations.

Her desire to help others actively—a desire which warred in her against the contemplative life, and seemed to mark out God's design for her—had brought her to England. She came bound by a vow to help others. So she had not pitched her tent in the midst of fine folk that she might share in their gaieties. It was a time of most bitter persecution, following the Gunpowder Plot: the prisons were crowded with Catholics; death and torture were any man's portion at any minute, provided he were Catholic. Mary, in her beauty, and protected by her rank and state, sheltered priests and refugees. In her splendour she went where souls were tempted, and brought them courage and help. In disguise she visited the prisons. Says her biographer: "When it was for the good of her neighbours, what did she reserve to herself? Neither honour, life, or liberty. When it suited with occasions, she put on servants' and mean women's clothes. No prison did she dread to visit or danger to pass, her courage making her incapable of fears or apprehensions, or memory of her tenderness and beauty."

The same says of the conversions she wrought: "Divers were withdrawn from libertine lives, others put out of occasions, and many that desired to be religious were holpen and disposed, so that they attained their desire."

One conversion she worked was of a priest who had fallen in evil ways. Afterwards fearing for him, she prayed constantly to his good angel for him, she having a great devotion to the holy angels. And one night, being very insistent in prayer, she had a vision of him sleeping in his room, which she had never seen, but was able to describe so minutely, "as there was not the placing of a stool found different;" and over him by the top of his bed leaned his Angel Guardian with arms stretched about him, who said to her, "Seest thou how faithfully I guard him!" And this angel was so grand and beautiful, that afterwards she always spoke of him as "the fine good angel," and she commissioned a painter to paint a picture of the vision from her words for this priest; and the old painter was so impressed in the painting, that from that time he said daily a Pater and Ave to his own angel guardian.

It was at the end of this London visit that the light began to break for her. She had had some thoughts of the Carmelite Order, to which a young sister already belonged; but one day combing her hair at the mirror, as she naïvely tells us, and resolving to give a portion to some poor girl desiring to become a

nun, in atonement for a morning meditation coldly made, she was presently wrapped in an ecstasy; and such a glory descended upon her, that come out of her vision, she could remember nothing but the Glory, Glory, Glory, which had resounded as at Bethlehem; but it had been made manifest to her that she should not be a Carmelite.

After all, the true vocation descended simply enough. When the time came for her return to St. Omer, five noble and beautiful girls elected to follow her, to share her lot, whatever that might be. These were Winifred Wigmore, Mary Poyntz, Joanna Browne, Susannah Rookwood, and Katharine Smith.

Mary Poyntz was to be a great administrator under the mother. She was extremely beautiful. At the time of her meeting Mary Ward, she was engaged to be married to a very noble cavalier. When she revealed to him her call to the religious life, he prayed her portrait. That she gave him is still preserved at Nymphenberg; it is small and most powerfully painted. One side of the face is fair and beautiful, with large dark eye and curling chestnut hair; the other side is a death's-head eaten by worms. The young man afterwards became himself a priest.

The parents of those noble ladies had so great a confidence in Mary Ward, though she was now but in her twenty-fourth year, that they willingly intrusted their daughters to her, the more that persecution raged so in England. A little later her five children were

joined by Barbara Ward, her sister, and Barbara Babthorpe.

The little community settled down in their house in the Grosse Rue at St. Omer, and began quietly their work of education. They received into the house and boarded the children of English parents; the townspeople's children they taught in a day-school without remuneration. All this was a new departure as regards the teaching of girls.

They put themselves under the spiritual guidance of the Jesuits, and adopted as far as possible the rule of St. Ignatius. So they worked and waited patiently till the Holy See should recognise them as an Order.

In the next ten years they gained many powerful friends and patrons. Ten great convents were founded from St. Omer in those years, whose history may be read in the Life of Mary Ward, published by Messrs. Burns & Oates, and to which I owe my information. I must pass over those years to the great trouble that fell upon Mary Ward and her Institute. I wish I could give some of Mary's addresses to her spiritual daughters. One understands how this great soul, contemptuous of all obstacles, might attract to itself the enmity of Mr. Doubting and Mr. Facing-both-ways. She speaks for her sex with no uncertain voice. Some priest having said of her and her daughters that they had begun with fervour, but were after all "but women," Mary refers to it in one of her addresses.

"There is no such difference between men and

women that women may not do great things, as we have seen by examples of many saints. . . . If women were made so inferior to men in all things, why were they not exempted in all things as they are in some? For what think you of this word 'but women,' as if we were in all things inferior to some other creature, which I suppose to be man! Which I dare be bold to say is a lie; and, with respect to the good Father, may say it is an error."

Curiously enough, Mary Ward's foes arose out of her own household. The complaints and calumnies anent "the Jesuitesses," as their enemies called them, came chiefly from the English Church dignitaries. When the sifting comes which shall rehabilitate Mary Ward as one of the Church's valiant women, it shall be seen perhaps how much of the enmity came from honest error and apprehension, and how much from sheer envy and perverted judgment. Mary Ward loved England with a great love. Two of her houses were in London. Perhaps she was too brave a woman for her day, if not for her work. It is easy to understand that this new departure from the wonted enclosure for religious women would seem genuinely an evil thing to many a devout mind.

When she was at Hungerford House, in the Strand, a great mansion with a garden, where she and her companions lived outwardly as ladies of rank boarded together for society and pleasure, she did a perilous thing. Hearing that Abbot, the Protestant Arch-

bishop, whose pursuivants were seeking her incessantly, had expressed a great desire to see so wonderful a woman, she took it into her head to gratify his curiosity. She went with some of her companions dressed splendidly as was their policy—Barbara Ward wore "a gown of bright taffeta and rich petticoat trimmed of the newest fashion, and a deep yellow ruff,"—walking by Whitehall and Westminster, and carried in the ferryboat to Lambeth Palace. Here their appearance gained them instant admission, but the Archbishop was not at home, and Mary, after waiting a while, writ her name on his window-glass with a diamond, and took her departure.

However, I must pass by much, and come to the condemnation of Mary and her Institute by Pope Urban VIII. in 1631. This was a crushing blow, and was well in accordance with that sadness which seemed decreed to Mary Ward during life that she should sow the seed and behold no harvest. Worst of all, she and her nuns were declared guilty of obduracy and heresy, and she herself was imprisoned at the Anger Convent of Poor Clares in Munich.

Then must have fallen upon Mary Ward the desolation which she herself pathetically calls "the loneliness," from which she suffered much during her life. Her convents were closed, her nuns dispersed and scattered, the girls they had cared for sent back to their homes; all the labours of thirty years shattered and destroyed, and she and hers under a cloud most

bitter and terrible, the displeasure of the Church of which she was so faithful a daughter.

She submitted, of course, with absolute humility, and having been released by order of the Pope, who was much disturbed by the tidings of her imprisonment, which had been without his authority, she proceeded to plead her own cause. Though the Pope received her with a benignity very contradictory to the terms of the Bull of Suppression, she gained little at this time. Her enemies were too strong and too untiring. But she was permitted to gather in a house in Rome the faithful little band of English ladies who had from the first belonged to her, and she and they seem to have been treated with great tenderness by the Pope, despite all that had passed.

After this Mary Ward's life was one of waiting,—waiting and praying for the word that should rehabilitate her and hers, and breathe new life into the slain body of her work. She must often have said, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," with such fervour as few bring to that sublime prayer. She was to fulfil His will with the blindest obedience of all, that of committing the future of the work undertaken for Him entirely to Him, and dying without the knowledge of whether her work was accepted or not.

She returned to England in May 1639, after suffering great illness, and the hope deferred which is heart-sickness. Here and there her nuns had kept together, doing the work of education as they were permitted,

but seeming to claim no authorised standing as nuns. She brought to Queen Henrietta Maria a letter of high commendation from Urban, with whom she was now altogether rehabilitated; "a holy and great servant of God," he entitles her. The Queen welcomed her warmly, but was little enough able to serve her; even so exalted a Catholic as she had enough ado to worship in her own way. Mary settled herself and her ladies in St. Martin's Lane, which was surrounded by pleasant fields, green and quiet. Here they took up once again the old work of education. There are numberless letters showing what a motherly heart Mary brought to her task. There is one to Winifred Bedingfield concerning the poor children whom they educated voluntarily:—

"MY DEAR WINN,—Jesus forbid you should make such children as you teach pay one penny for windows, wood, or aught else. For God's love, if you do that work of charity, do it like yourself, not mercenarily; else, my dear Winn, follow my poor counsel, and leave it alone. *Vale, vale.*"

Or, again, she sends a message to the father of one of the noble children given eagerly to her care as soon as she had reached England:—

"MY DEAREST . . .,—Give your noble cousin a thousand good-nights for me. Tell him I was anxious this

evening to have had some fine garden flowers or such trifles to have recreated him with, and failing of all such commodities, I offered up to God my poor prayers for his health and happiness. Beg him to be merry, and look upon my grandchild's lock of hair. How I shall love his little daughter."

In 1642 Mary, her nuns, and the children in their care, removed to Yorkshire, where they were all domiciled in a roomy old mansion called Hutton Rudby. Here she was among friends; and many and sweet were the greetings between her and the great army of friends and relatives who abode in Yorkshire. The place was very quiet and secluded; and here they had the little chapel consecrated, and carried on their religious services unmolested; and the love of the poor they earned, so much so, that a kindly captain of pursuivants spared to molest them because Mary was so greatly beloved by the people.

All this time she was failing greatly in health. The community had removed to Hewarth, near York, when the civil war broke out, and for a time they had to take refuge in York itself when the Parliamentarians were lying before the walls. At this time Mary was well-nigh in a dying state. They were back again at Hewarth before the end came. She died on the 24th of January 1645. There is a very beautiful and quaint letter from Mary Poyntz to Barbara Babthorpe, describing the manner of Mary Ward's death. It is a

long letter. I give one or two passages, omitting the quaint disguises under which each is named, a precaution necessary in those times:—

"On the fifteenth day she changed much, and was in dead agony. I would ask where the pain was; she answered, 'From head to foot.' Pitiful sore eyes, throat greatly swelled, which we saw not till dead, yet never changed her sweet, serene look, as it were between jest and earnest. Katharine Smith said, 'If you die, we will take pack in lap and away to the heathen.' She answered, 'If I thought so, it would break my heart;' and on other occasions still insinuated how much it would express her children's love to take her death well, and show our loves by advancing our trade, and promises what she will do with the Lady Mary's son. Winifred begged she would ask of God her own life. She made sign she would; she had difficulty to speak. Again Winifred asked if she had done it. She answered, 'Yes, entirely and most resignedly.' Now we make reflection, she had a greater knowledge of her own death than her tender love to us permitted her to manifest, not to contristate us. . . . Then with greatest love embracing each, seemed to mind us no more, but with eyes and hands gave sign of sweet interior acts. . . . After death the veins of temples, hands, and limbs, as perfect azure as ever can be painted, a decaying red in her lips as when alive; in fine, no signs of death but cold. Was kept from Monday to Wednesday, and the last more lovely than

the first. . . . And this is my humble petition to all, that you repay that endless love with love. . . . We were so poor that we had not wherewithal to buy what she was to travel in, had not Winn bought it. I know not how to hear from you. Patience till God will."

They buried her in Osbaldwick churchyard, where the lowly grave may be seen to this day. The church is in the midst of the village-green, with the few old houses of the villagers round about it. The grave touches the church-wall, being between the path and the wall. On the flat stone is chiselled, in black letter :—

"To love the Poor,
Persevere in the same line by,
And rise with them,
Was all the ayme
of
Mary Ward."

Her grave was long an object of much veneration among Catholics and Protestants of the neighbourhood alike. The nuns from the convent of Micklegate-Bar, in Yorkshire, which Frances Bedingfield founded, and which has never closed its doors through all storms and persecutions, were wont to visit the grave faithfully. An old writer says: "When the leaves were turning, shining beautiful, the ladies at the Bar had their wont to go to Osbaldwick and pray at the grave of Mrs. Mary Ward, their first Abbess."

In 1703 the whole case of the Institute was re-opened before Pope Clement XI., owing to the soli-

citations of many influential persons. The inquiry resulted in its complete vindication, and its confirmation as a religious Order. The Superior-General of that day was Barbara Babthorpe, a grand-niece of Mary's cousin, and spiritual daughter. She is, therefore, officially the foundress of the Institute, though one can scarcely read the life of Mary Ward without believing that in time she will be restored to her rightful place in the love and veneration of her children and the Christian world.

The seed she sowed prospered greatly. Of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary there are now in Germany, in Austria, in England, and Ireland, India, and the Colonies close on a hundred and fifty houses. Great must be the effect of their life of labour and prayer on the world.

With Rathfarnham, the mother-house in Ireland, I shall deal later. I must now give a sketch of her who was to be the Mary Ward of Ireland.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCES MARY TERESA BALL AND THE IRISH BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE.

So Mary Ward's foundation became a school of souls, a nursery wherein the young creatures who were to be corporally or spiritually the mothers of souls were prepared for their vocation. The convent of hers which stood in England, which was to be founded by one of her immediate spiritual daughters twenty-two years after the mother's death, was the ancient convent of Micklegate-Bar, in York, which for more than two hundred years has never closed its doors. This nineteenth century, with all its sins upon its head, has been enormously fruitful for the Church Catholic. When one remembers the barrenness of the three centuries following the Reformation as to church-building or convent-founding, the ripening of the seed sown since tolerance became anything but a name is amazing. Truly the seed sown was the blood of martyrs, which to the enemy was as a sowing of dragon's teeth to spring up armed men.

In those years of dearth for Catholics, "the Bar," as the old York convent is affectionately called, was

perhaps the only place within our islands where Catholics of position could send their daughters to school, and not endanger a more precious possession than learning. The effects of this little centre of illumination in a night of darkness are inestimable. Now I am concerned with but one child of the school, Frances Ball, who was to found the first branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin, which in its seventy years of life has sent forth nearly fifty convents affiliated to the mother-house at Rathfarnham, Dublin.

The foundress of the Bar Convent was Frances Bedingfield, who was a very dear daughter of Mary Ward. Her family was the great old Catholic family of the Bedingfields of Oxburgh, in Norfolk, which in the hottest days of persecution never conformed. Sir Henry Bedingfield, her great-grandfather, was Governor of the Tower to Mary Tudor, and, in his own house of Oxburgh, a jailer of that most slippery captive, the Princess Elizabeth. Oxburgh Hall, whence Frances Bedingfield and ten of her eleven sisters went forth to be nuns, is a great moated house of red brick, the four square walls of it enclosing a courtyard, and the whole lying pleasantly and sunnily in a green park, with many woods on the horizon. One crosses the moat by a bridge, replacing the drawbridge. The turreted gateway by which one enters is, as old Blomefield called it, "a majestical tower," with its arch 22 feet long by 13 broad, and its four corner turrets 80 feet in air. In the chambers of this tower Queen

Elizabeth was captive, and when I saw it one summer, her embroidery-frame lay in the narrow window, as she might have flung it in a fit of fierce impatience. There, too, up a winding stair, was a little cell, not built for a priest's hiding-hole, for the house dates far earlier than persecution, but so used at need. There used to be a great hall of Oxburgh over against the wide gateway, fashioned like Westminster Hall, with oak ceilings, equal in height to the 54 feet of its length, and beautiful oriel windows.

It was from this stately home Frances Bedingfield went out to a work of toil and prayer and to imminent martyrdom. The Bar Convent was consecrated by intimate association with a martyr, though the foundress was not to be crowned in that wise. The founder, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, who gave Mrs. Frances Bedingfield house and endowment for her nuns, was, with many relatives and friends, charged with high treason, the establishing of the nunnery being a main fact against them. He escaped, being an old man of eighty-five, and of most honourable repute, but his nephew, Thomas Thwing, being a priest, was executed with the hideous ferocity of the time, though Charles II. did what he could to save him. He was drawn on a hurdle from York Castle past the convent, where the Sisters, one of them his sister in blood, were watching with agonised hearts. Forty priests had travelled the same road before him to the place of execution, between the high-road and Knavesmire,

where he was hanged, and cut down before he was dead for the dreadful "drawing and quartering." They keep linen steeped in his blood at the Bar Convent, where they have also the hand of Blessed Margaret Clitheroe, "pressed to death by eight hundred pounds weight, for ye faith of Christ, 25th of March 1586," as the old inscription records.

Childish association with such things must needs foster a great desire for the service of Christ, and be sure such desire came to Mary Frances Teresa Ball, who was at school here from 1803 to 1808. She followed at school her sister Anna Maria, who, in her married life as Mrs. O'Brien, was the great helper and benefactress of Mary Aikenhead, the foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity. The last evening of the elder girls' stay at school, she took her little sister for a walk in the convent garden. Frances never forgot that summer evening, and the tender talk; but the thing that most impressed her was when her sister said to her at the end of the talk, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His glory, and all other things shall be added to you." It was a fitting text in the mouth of her who in a life in the world was as truly to find God's kingdom as the young sister predestined for a religious foundress.

The story of Frances Ball's discovery of her vocation is this. She had danced at a ball till midnight, and then, as she was to receive Holy Communion in the morning, she asked her mother to take her home.

Mrs. Ball, herself a most good and fervent Catholic, but living her life in the world, refused to do this, on the pretext that the dancing had but begun. Frances danced no more that night, but made what mental preparation she could while the dancers swung around her in the lighted ball-room. The next morning she arose for early Mass, and received Holy Communion; but when, at breakfast, she mentioned her intention of going to another Mass, her mother forbade her, considering her to want rest after the night. The young girl retired to her room obediently, and spent the morning in private devotions, but the incident had filled her with a great and generous impatience of a world whose claims incessantly pushed those of God out of sight. In this sudden feeling she recognised clearly how entirely God came first with her, and the imperative necessity of her heart and soul to be employed in His work alone, and with Him alone for Master.

Frances Ball was at this time about eighteen years of age, and of a very remarkable beauty. It was the beauty of pure outlines and exquisite pale colour, which time does not destroy, and it impresses one in the marble bust taken from her in her elder age. She was tall and slender, her movements full of grace. When she went with her sister, Mrs. O'Brien, a little earlier, to visit Mary Aikenhead, who was to found the Irish Sisters of Charity, at Cork, she attracted universal admiration. Mary Aikenhead's anonymous biographer,

S. A., in her most valuable book, tells how the two stately sisters were greatly admired. They dressed in the highest fashion, for it was a time when other worldliness put on the garb of worldliness for religion's sake as much as to gratify the natural impulses; and the garb of the day, wide-leaved Spanish hats, with feathers curling about the brim, and straight velvet cloaks to the feet, of puce or carmelite or maroon colour, suited the tall young figures admirably.

This Mrs. O'Brien, Frances' eldest sister, was a very remarkable woman. She it was who had first urged the kingdom of God and His glory on her young sister's heart. Though she chose to dwell in the world herself, God's kingdom was within her and around her. The wife of a wealthy Catholic merchant, she held that the times were gone by for Catholics in Ireland to shrink into bye-streets, and let the Protestants jostle them off the path. It was a time to hold their head high, to show they were as good as their neighbours. So she was mistress of a splendid house; she had her carriages and horses; she was dressed to adorn her striking beauty and stateliness of person. What she was to Mary Aikenhead we must read in the Life. She was her right hand, under God, in the establishing of the Order, as she was a leader in all work that was to "lift up the standard of Christ and trample the standard of Satan under foot." It was not alone in money and goods she helped Mary Aikenhead. Many a time, while her carriage was going to

and fro on the nuns' business, would she herself don the poke-bonnet and long cloak of the nun, and accompany a Sister of Charity on her visitation through noisome alleys and wretched tenements, so that another Sister might be at liberty for some pressing work. In the difficulty Frances was to meet with from her parents in embracing the religious life, this sister was like to be a powerful ally.

Another friend, and indeed the friend out of all on earth, was Dr. Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin. He it was who was primarily responsible both for the Irish Sisters of Charity and the Irish branches of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin. Those were the days when Catholics were beginning to be tolerated. No sooner had the tolerance come than they began to thrive and flourish greatly. Dr. Murray was a great man to be at the helm at such a time. Havoc and dearth there had been for three centuries: he set himself straightway to make good the havoc and render fruitfulness for dearth. Works for the body and for the soul of his children he undertook side by side. There must be nuns to tend his sick and shelter orphans, to save penitents and serve the poor, as well as nuns to foster the young hearts and intellects, and to balance the world's sin and slothfulness by incessant prayer, and service, and self-denial.

He himself had been in the thick of persecution. He was Curate of Arklow in the rebellion of 1798, when his parish priest was murdered in his bed, and

he had to fly for life; he was fired at crossing the river near Shelton Abbey, but the bullets did not strike him. Reaching Dublin, he was appointed to a curacy, and soon won high reputation in the cure of souls. He was still a young man when he was appointed Archbishop of Hierapolis and Coadjutor in the See of Dublin.

To Dr. Murray, Frances Ball brought her desires for a religious life. Probably he recognised at once that Heaven had put into his hands one of the instruments he required for building up again the maimed Church; but for all that, he gave her three years of probation and silence before he helped her to any action for carrying out her desire. That very summer of 1812, he sent to York two girls—Mary Aikenhead and Cecilia Walsh—who were to found for him those nursing sisters and servants of the poor who have prospered greatly as the Irish Sisters of Charity. In Frances Ball he saw other qualities, no doubt, which showed him her fitness to be the mother of an Order of teaching nuns; and no doubt Ireland was as sorely in want of teachers as ever was Reformed England in the days of Mary Ward.

She was not very minded to be a foundress, or indeed to be of an Order much of whose prayer is necessarily work. Like many a fervent young soul before her, she desired the most hidden life and the most ascetic, but she accepted what was laid upon her with obedience, though with trembling. She set her-

self in the years of her probation to acquire such knowledge and capacity as would serve the Institute to which she was to belong. She read diligently, making abstracts of her reading; and her brother, afterwards Judge Ball, gave her much assistance in this scheme of self-education. Meanwhile she was praying and serving, now mounting noisome garret-stairs with her beautiful sister, the twain bringing food, and teaching, and counsel, and she was tending the altars of the churches with a keen happiness in her task.

She was twenty-one when an end was put to her waiting. Dr. Murray, after much looking about, had finally decided on the Institute of the Blessed Virgin as the most likely to fulfil his needs, and in the Easter week of 1814 we find him writing to Mrs. Coyney, the Superioress of the York Convent: "Frances Ball has sanguine expectations of being able to accomplish her purpose. She means to offer herself as an humble candidate for your Institute, and hopes, though with great difficulty, to obtain her mother's consent. . . . I cannot give up the hope of seeing a house of your holy Institute in this country, and I trust this little treasure we are sending you may give some colour of claim to that blessing."

Mrs. Coyney, a very notable nun, was not prepared to send out a foundation from her own convent, though she was very willing to train Dr. Murray's postulant for that purpose. Frances had one more struggle:

the mother's unwillingness, which Dr. Murray's letter refers to, was hard to overcome. It was difficult to give up this beautiful and gracious youngest child. "Unless he give up father and mother," said the Lord, "he is not worthy of Me." And there is no doubt a great tearing of heart-strings in giving a child to the cloister. The garb of the nun is the livery of another world, and the old affections and the old equalities seem as unlike as if death had struck them away. There will come back again no children to look at one with the eyes of their mother. There will be none of the familiar going and coming, no littleness of human interests about which two hearts can meet. It must seem to the bereft mother as if her child had gone from her into a rarified atmosphere, out of which she looks back at her with calmer eyes and a holier heart, yet with some loss of warm human sympathy. Great are such sacrifices, and if they could be more easily made, they should fall far below the level of their greatness.

Poor Mrs. Ball's little struggle came to a pathetic end. One day, by accident or design of God, she went into a church other than that she usually attended. It was the feast of St. Thomas of Aquin. Some one was preaching, and to the poor mother's heart it must have seemed a strange and cruel subject. The preacher dwelt on the refusal of the saint's parents to give him to the religious life, and the difficulties they threw in the way of his vocation, with words of solemn warning

and denunciation which fell like molten lead on one listener's heart. She must have taken it as the voice of God, for immediately she withdrew all opposition, and let things go their appointed way. On the 11th of June 1814 Frances entered York Convent.

Mrs. Coyney had asked for a preparation of five years for the young foundress. On September 8, Our Lady's Nativity of the year she entered, she was clothed with the habit and received the white veil. Two years were to elapse before her profession.

About those five years we hear little: the convent reticence draws an impenetrable veil over them. Mary Aikenhead left, the year after Frances came. They were sure to be friends for many reasons, of this world and the other. Brown-eyed Mary Aikenhead, with her beautiful humorous Irish face, her smile and her dimples, seems to me one of the loveliest saints in or out of the calendar. "My heart!" she would say to her young nuns long after, "are you happy? Then you must be good, and make others happy also." And she was a centre of health and happiness and wholesomeness wherever she was through all her crowded life.

Frances was well tried during her probation. Besides her school-work she was laden with common household tasks—she who longed for nothing so much as to flee away like the dove and be at rest. Gently bred and reared as she was, she had menial tasks allotted to her. She waited on the nuns at table, and once she

scoured down a long flight of stairs. Her scanty recreation she was obliged to spend with the school children, who loved her for her gentleness. Her novice-mistress, Mother Austin Chalmers, had a wise knowledge of the truth that one who has to command must learn to obey.

At the end of it all we have the verdict upon her of one of the sisters, "Her life was altogether supernatural; her very appearance breathed holiness: her every action, little or great, was to the glory of the Lord God."

She was very happy at York—"beloved Micklegate," she calls it in one of her letters long afterwards. She carried away from it that devotion to St. Michael which perhaps was inspired by the name of the place. Frances Bedingfield, two centuries earlier, had hung his picture over the gate of the convent when it was besieged by a mob, and the enemy dispersed, strangely and inexplicably awed and quelled. Many of the devout and indevout of York averred that there stood in the path a great soldier on a white horse, brandishing a sword of light, and at his face the mob fell back howling and dismayed. The legend lives in York to this day. The devotion to the knight-angel came with Frances Ball to Loretto in Ireland. His name is on the bell of the church at Rathfarnham.

I have mentioned some of the relics possessed by the Bar Convent. There are others greater and holier, near which those spouses of Christ must be happy

indeed to dwell. In the old days of persecution many precious relics were deposited at the convent when it became difficult or impossible for private owners to save them from desecration. There is in this holy house of Loretto a portion of the true Cross, preserved in a cross of silver-gilt, and authenticated beyond doubt. There are also small portions of the manger of Bethlehem, the crown of thorns, the pillar of the scourging, the purple garment worn by our Lord in Pilate's house, with many other most precious relics.

Frances Ball at her profession took the name of Teresa of Jesus, which she signed to her letters, and by which she is henceforth known. After her probation of five years, she left York on August 10, 1821, with two companions to aid her in her undertaking. The two first novices who had joined her in York had died during their noviciate. Those who came to succeed them were Anne Thierry, a niece of Edmund Burke, and Eleanor Arthur, the daughter of a Limerick gentleman, who had suffered heavily in the persecutions that followed the '98. A slender beginning for a new foundation, one would say.

For a little while after they reached Dublin, they abode with the Sisters of Charity, now well established at their convent in Stanhope Street. Then they removed to Harold's Cross, where they started their school-keeping in a little and humble way. Fifteen months after their arrival in Ireland they entered into possession of Rathfarnham, which Dr. Murray had

bought for them, and which was now in a fair way to receive them.

As I do not propose to write Frances Ball's biography, I will say no more of her most fruitful life and motherhood in God. The convent, made with such little beginnings, throve beyond imagining. From this mother-house went out in the mother's lifetime twelve foundations in Ireland, four in India, three in Canada, and two in Mauritius. Since her death this number has more than doubled itself. She died on Whitsunday, May 19, 1861, at her own beautiful convent of Dalkey by the sea, a great house of grey granite, with its gardens running down to the water's edge.

But Rathfarnham, the benign mother of many convents, the dear home to which many a nun over the world turns longing eyes of half-human, half-spiritual affection, must have its story told. Mother Xaveria, whose story I am to write, never went far from this great convent. There she came as a school-girl, entered there as a novice, was in her turn Mistress of Novices and Mistress of Schools. There for many a year she held, after her great predecessor and mother, the stately post of Superior-General, with its duties, its cares, its rewards, and its compensations. There she died among her devoted daughters.

CHAPTER V.

RATHFARNHAM CONVENT.

RATHFARNHAM is a suburb of Dublin, to some extent historical, and altogether beautiful. Fortunate Dublin, which, lying between the mountains and the sea, has the sea-wind in its streets, and the loveliest pastoral scenery within a tram-ride of its centre. The Dublin mountains are the loveliest and most lovable of hills; not high, and with cultivation going nearly to their summits, but *such* a line in the landscape, long, undulating, ineffably gracious—a veritable line of beauty. Then they take the colours of the moist climate, whose mists and whose clouds are its glory. Heliotrope they will be ordinarily—that warm grey with purple and pink looking through it—but at times silver and rosy, and green and silver, and yet again of a shadow-land of dense blue, which gives them a new majesty. One crosses over them to the Wicklow Mountains. Up there over their walls were the fastnesses of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, wild Irish kernes, who raided for cattle on the English Palesmen down here in the rich plains as harassingly as the

Bordermen of Scotland on their English neighbours in the old days. Sometimes they were battering at the gates of the old city itself, with the Norman burghers shaking in their furs and velvet, and the Norman bowmen mounting hastily to walls and battlements. They are empty enough now, those glens, with little more than the mists and the rains trooping through the passes and by Glanismole, *i.e.*, the Valley of the Thrush, and other beautifully-named valleys out to the lowlands.

The stone house on Mount Pelia yonder, lifting its stark outline against the sky, belongs to another date. It is the Hell-Fire Club-house, the country quarters of the dare-devil rakes of the last century, who were emulating here in Dublin the doings of the Mohocks and other gentlemen of that kidney over the water. Here they adjourned for their saturnalias of gambling and drinking, winding up with duels on the green sward in the dewy morning, so that of them who went out, not half, it might be, returned.

John Philpot Curran's house, the Priory, lies yonder among the trees. The Priory of a strange and jocund Order it was when he and his Monks of the Screw were here. Tradition says they held Loretto Abbey for a season, and filled with their mad revelry the great rooms now made holy by the faces of the nuns; but the tradition is not substantiated.

The house was built by William Palliser, only son of the then Archbishop of Cashel, about 1725 or

1730. On his death it passed, with its garden and deer-park, its library, furniture, and all mathematical instruments, to his cousin, the Rev. John Palliser. In 1798 it was bought by George Grierson, the King's printer, whose family had held that office for over a century.

The first King's printer of the Griersons published, at the sign of the Two Bibles in Essex Street, the first edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost" published in Ireland. This was in 1724. He also produced Dupin's "Ecclesiastical History" in three folio volumes, an edition very greatly prized now by bibliophiles.

This first of the Griersons had for wife a prodigy of a lady, whom I wish I could place in Rathfarnham as a lovely and auspicious forerunner of the teaching dames of Loretto. Constantia Grierson was the child of poor people in Kilkenny, and received only such training as the minister of the parish contrived to give her when her mother could spare her from her needlework. When she came to Dublin in her eighteenth year to study obstetrics under a famous Dublin surgeon, she was already mistress of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and several modern languages, a mathematician, a profound philosopher, a poet of great merit. She married the King's printer, became the friend of Swift, Sheridan, and Dr. Delany, edited Terence and Tacitus, wrote a history of England, and died in her twenty-seventh year. With all her learning, she was humble, gentle, and affectionate, and very sincerely pious. However,

she knew not the Rathfarnham her children's children were to inhabit, and did not stir from narrow Essex Street down by the river. The house she dwelt in was removed when the street was being widened in 1761.

Moore visited the later Griersons here, and has left on record their splendid hospitality and the lavish style in which they lived.

When Mrs. Ball came into possession of the place, it had been disused for some time. It looked very disheartening, we are told, on the November morning, damp, and chill, and fireless, with the neglected garden all rotting into ruin, and the heathen gods and goddesses on the terrace dripping and disconsolate. But it had great capacities, and she, with her strong architectural vein, was the one to utilise them to the utmost.

It is now a splendid pile, and within and without it would have delighted the heart of Mary Ward, who counted nothing too rich for the service of the Lord, and whose large heart and hand have descended to her spiritual daughters. From Rathfarnham it looks like a fortified place, the rising tiers of the church-wall lending to the illusion. The house was long and low, of red brick faced with stone, descending on one side to a lawn and carriage-drive by a fine double flight of steps, on the other to wide gardens by grassy terraces.

Mrs. Ball added a new storey to the old house, doing

the work so cleverly and beautifully that it is impossible to detect the addition. Round about new buildings have sprung up; on one side the infirmary, a detached building; the church, and a great hall or theatre for the school, make two wings to the old house. A little way off in the grounds are the poor-schools, built in later years. The convent with its outbuildings and dependencies makes a little settlement in itself.

Entering the hall through double glass doors, one is struck by the home-likeness of the place. There is no coldness or austerity here, with the beautiful warm colours of the deep-set mahogany doors, and the splendid tall old clock ticking away in one corner. There are pictures on the wall, and a bust of Mrs. Ball, pure and beautiful in marble, looks across at one as one enters.

Many doors and staircases deploy from this great hall. To the left is the drawing-room door, which admits one into a room difficult to excel for stateliness and beauty. It is of great size, with an open glass door and deep windows looking away to the gardens and hayfields and the placid mountains. Sitting there, one hears the laughter of children at play, and catches a glimpse of white-veiled novices trooping in like a flock of doves from a little snatch of recreation. The ceiling is decorated lavishly with that ornate stucco-work which obtained in last-century Dublin, and which artists came here from Italy to execute. The doors,

with deep doorways, are beautiful red mahogany; the mantelpiece is inlaid with coloured marbles. Here and there in the rooms are pupils with their friends, or nuns with theirs, each group quite sufficiently isolated, though there may be half a dozen, because of the room's great proportions. Its glory, however, is the leather hangings, real stamped leather, which must be worth a small fortune. It was purple and blue and crimson on gold, but, except in the shadowed recesses, Time has dimmed the gold to delicate silver. No trumperies of furniture or ornaments desecrate this, which might be called a saloon. The chairs and settees are some which were given by the friends of Fanny Ball and the other nuns when the young convent started its housekeeping, so they are not *roturière*, but fine and respectable, with brave seats and carved backs. The few pictures are mainly engravings, fine and rare, of Rome in the last century, and are not unworthy of their places on these walls. A big picture of Dr. Murray goes from mantel to ceiling. The panelling of the wall is, curiously enough, white wood, as are the windows, with their cushioned red seats; one wonders why they are not made to match the crimson mahogany of the doors.

The other rooms on this floor are in keeping, with mirrors set sometimes in a wall, and a picture painted in the frame of it. Some are schoolrooms, some parlours. They have all the purity and spotlessness one knows in convent rooms; but trifles here and there, and an occasional good picture on the walls, give them that

warmth which makes one feel Rathfarnham to be the most home-like of convents. Here is an Arundel replica on the old walls; there an engraving from a modern Academician. For the children here, that education of the eye which is so important is never forgotten. In the first schoolroom are a couple of prints after Lady Butler—"The Roll Call" and another—stirring pictures to set even before girls, to whom perhaps lessons of courage and manliness, so to speak, are the best teaching, since the womanly virtues come by nature.

Up a stone stair to another corridor, and we are in the midst of delicious low-ceiled rooms, each one a nest of cupboards, and with flowery old paper on the walls trailing many wreaths. If the children are out at their play, every one of the low wide windows will be open, and filled with the purple of the mountains, which loom softly in the near distance. In the corridor is a statue of the Sacred Heart, with flowers in a pair of wonderful Dresden vases, brought in by some nun, and which only less generous folk would desire to be sold and given to the poor. In a room across the corridor, a business room now for the Rev. Mother, Mother Xaveria died. At the end she had her bed's foot drawn close to the window, so that she died hearing the birds in the thick branches.

On a higher storey are the great dormitories which she constructed — beautiful rooms, with pitch-pine wood-work, and long lancet windows set high over-

head, and a great crucifix overlooking it, and all the winds of heaven blowing through on a summer day, and fluttering the little blue curtains looped away from the snowy beds.

If you are minded for yet a higher flight, you will take a corkscrew staircase which winds up to the roof and down to the Noviceship, and which a light-headed novice might well find a serious obstacle to the religious life. Up above you are in Rue Celeste as the nuns call it, a veritable garret storey. One side has a range of little rooms, usually devoted to piano-practice, but at the time of the annual ladies' retreat given over to them, who flee here from the world for a season. Delightful rooms they are, with irregular ceilings and windows overlooking the hills. On the other side are the nuns' cells, with their Spartan simplicity of little beds, blue counterpaned and curtained, the solitary chair, the washing-basin. One or two had a tiny looking-glass hanging up—not to foster vanity, good reader, but to help in the arrangement of gimp and veil: the little square scarcely held more than the brows and the quiet eyes of her who looked into it.

The corridor winds away round the lantern-tower of the church, standing by the glass octagons of which, one looked down on the marble altar and the silver lamp. This tower, all of glass, is charmingly light and elegant: the octagons open, so that a sick nun could assist at mass in the church without leaving her corridor.

In one of those little cells Mother Xaveria, horribly afraid of death, took her terrified heart in her hand and watched all night by a dead sister. In another—a little dormitory this—she slept for a term, and the nuns will point out her bed to one with immense reverence and affection. Here she lay often cold at night when Mistress of Novices, having taken her hot jar to one of her children, and made her accept it as an act of obedience.

Downstairs near the church is the Noviciate, a long, light, bright room, with Gothic windows looking out on the little quaint beds of flowers, each of which is a novice's garden. The sight of them and of the novices, with their child-like faces and gentle docility, suggested some rough verses, which might well be bettered.

A NOVICE'S GARDEN.

Fenced with old box, and quaint and neat,
  Wells of sweet in the green sward:
Here the rose and lily are sweet,
  (Her heart shall be Thy garden, Lord!)

Here are pansy and gillyflowers,
  Mignonette and the Mary-gold:
Here the butterflies flit in showers:
  Here is the brown bee overbold.

Lavender, grey-blue, like her eyes,
  Southernwood, that is sweet to press:
Very wise are the butterflies;
  Brown bee knoweth his business.

This mild queen of the honey flowers,
There she diggeth and hoeth well;
Here she sendeth the grateful showers
From her spray at the evening bell.

Comes she not, and the flowers' sad faces
Droop and pucker; their hearts complain:
"Where is she with her tender graces?
Where is she with her quickening rain?"

In her heart is another garden,
Digged and planted for only One;
Here One cometh, the garden's Warden,
Finds it fair as the moon and sun.

The Noviciate is full of pleasant signs of life and occupation. Of a dark day it would still be sunshiny, with all that yellow wood. Here Mother Xaveria sat below the great crucifix with such divine peace on her beautiful transparent face, that a home-sick, discouraged novice, feeling heaven very far off, looked up at it, and grasped the human help and comfort given of God, and was strong.

The beautiful church, dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and the first in Ireland to be so dedicated, one goes to through a corridor lavishly hung with pictures. It was characteristic of Mrs. Ball that she began this church on a grand scale, and though she had to pause now and then for want of funds, never abated a jot of her pretensions till she got it finished according to her first plan. It is cruciform in shape and of Gothic architecture. The nuns' choir is in the nave; the

school-children and lay-sisters are in the left and right transepts. The groined roof is blue, as are the walls and tower; all the wood-work is oak. At the centre stands the altar of white marble mixed with grey Sicilian marble. Two kneeling angels sculptured by Hogan are at each side, and beneath is the same sculptor's celebrated Dead Christ; there is a beautiful reredos of the grey marble. The altar is kept glowing with flowers which flash back the scarlet of the undying altar-light. The nuns' stalls are carved oak, and over the Rev. Mother's stall there is a beautifully carved canopy. The organ, which was designed for Westminster Abbey, is a beautiful instrument, and elaborately decorated. The little church gives you an idea of lightness and purity, with the altar at its centre, and all ways diverging towards it. The church opens on a cloister, with an altar at intervals to St. Michael, St. Joseph, St. Ignatius, and one with a specially beautiful marble statue of the Immaculate Conception.

If you are a privileged person, you may persuade the Sister Sacristan to show you some of her treasures, copes, and vestments, and chasubles of cloth of gold or of heavy white silk shot through with silver, each lying in its tissue paper in a flat drawer. The bridal trains of the young spouses of Christ are devoted to such holy uses afterwards, and the bride who is saying farewell to the world and fine raiment will be more solicitous than any bride of this world to have her

wedding-gown fine and costly and splendid, since afterwards it will be used so intimately in the service of the Beloved.

There, too, will be shown you chalices and monstrances made of the gold and jewels that once shone about the arms and throat now hidden away in the black serge and the white linen.

"No jewels hath she save her rosary,
Whereon to count, all shining, set a-row,
Pearls for the Mother-Maid who shamed their snow;
Rubies for drops of the Lord's agony;
Emeralds that flash like green fields and the sea.
Green are the fields when airs of Easter blow,
And the Lord's risen from the tomb, and so
The birds and flowers and leaves are full of glee.
Lilies these might be, wrought with passion-flowers,
Twined in and out with daffodils aflame;
Only be sure that when she saith His Name,
The Bridegroom sees His bride in hidden bowers,
More fair than any queen clad i' the sun,
And round her throat white splendours of the moon."

The corresponding wing to the chapel is the great school-hall, a lofty and splendid apartment, with tall lancet windows filled with diamond panes springing up to the ceiling. In this are held examinations, distribution of prizes, and all such ceremonies. When I was there, the children were preparing to commemorate the golden jubilee of a nun with plays and recitations, and were constructing on the pretty stage the Gates of Heaven for Tom Moore's "Paradise and the Peri" in naked daylight, an uncelestial contrivance of rose

and grey paper. In their clothes-closets upstairs, running down the long corridors outside the dormitories, were strange robes of kings and queens and tinsel crowns among the demure school-girls' frocks.

The grounds about Rathfarnham are very beautiful. They are old pleasaunces, and have the velvety grass and the great venerable trees which tell of ages of leisure and kindliness and undisturbed peace. There is a little lake in the old green turf full of water-plants. There are birds in the chestnut and elm trees, whose families have rested and sung here for generations. There are old fruit-trees on the brown walls of the kitchen-garden, and the apple and pear and cherry trees, which spread wide lichened boughs out in the raspberry beds, are so old that their fruit is grown small, though sweet and fresh, as only those folk know who possess such trees, and are spoilt for ever for fair-seeming American apples by their own delicious little peach-apples and russets. The gardens begin hard by the little cemetery, with its grey arch shaded by the purple mourning flowers of the wistaria. Outside the many gardens there is a wide space of ground which is only pleasaunce, which no one happily has tried to make useful, full of winding walks and little grottoes, with the nuns' statues and votive lights, the only new things in a world where all is old. It is a fit framing for the mild faces and trailing gowns of the nuns. It is not easy to realise the city so near to one. It is like Tennyson's garden—

"News of the busy city comes to it
In sound of funeral and marriage bells,
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, one hears
The windy clanging of the minster clock."

The useful part of the domain lies in those great kitchen-gardens and in the hayfields beyond the green pleasaunce. Rosary Walk lies beyond the garden boundaries, and on the edge of a hayfield, full of great cocks when I was there in July. Those who call a convent a prison should come and see the open doors of this cage. One goes down the grassy terraces from the kindly old house and by a long path, and so through an ever-open gate into the hayfields and the world. Rosary Walk lies the other side of a green trellis matted with roses. Up and down its quarter of a mile the nuns walk, rosary in hand, with serious eyes not insensible to the beauty of this laughing landscape and the chain of gracious hills walling it around. By the road winding around the base of the hills Mother Xaveria often drove in pain and weakness to visit her children at their houses of Bray and Dalkey, on the sea-shore. As you stand there surveying all that fair prospect, the nuns will fill your ears with stories of her patience and sweetness. It was some such spirit of hidden sweetness as hers which ruled and rules Rathfarnham, and makes it so dearly beloved a home to the nuns, who are as happy as birds there, and who in those days of the vacation could cluster around one full of brightness and interest, with

none of the affected gloom which belongs but to the imitation of religion. No wonder that it is an Alma Mater to them, who never leave it without a backward sigh, and return to it gladly and swiftly as birds to the nest, as a child to the arms of a most sweet mother.

CHAPTER VI.

JANE FALLON: HER BIRTH—HER PARENTS—HER CHILDHOOD.

JANE FALLON, afterwards Mother Xaveria, whose nature was not represented in her stiff little name, was born at Ffrenchlawn, county Roscommon, on the 6th of February 1832. Her father and mother came of good old stock. Bernard Fallon, unfortunately for himself, was reared in the old lavish style current among the Irish gentry by a too adoring mother. His father, dying when the lad was a child, stipulated that he should not come of age till he was twenty-five. His mother broke through the stipulation, and made him absolute master of his property long before he was of an age to care for it: hence his beautiful home, Runnamede, went from him to strangers before his children had done much more than open their eyes upon it: hence his own early death, and the shadow upon his young wife, which never quite lifted with this life.

Mary Ffrench, this admirable wife and mother, was so strong an influence in the lives of her children as to warrant some account of her. Her father was a

riding-to-hounds, shooting, dining, and wining gentleman of the old school; withal a man of admirable integrity of character and shrewd business qualities. Her mother was a woman of high and holy nature: the friendship between mother and daughter was of the most tender and exquisite kind, and lasted through all shocks of death and separation. Mary Ffrench was one of two daughters. She was very beautiful, with a spiritualised beauty Mother Xaveria was to inherit. She was straight and slender, with a certain stately way of holding herself. She was oval-faced, with a Madonna sweetness of expression: golden-auburn hair was thick around her serene brows: her eyes were grey-hazel—Mother Xaveria's eyes, which were agate clouded over by dreams: her skin had a pure transparency.

Needless to say such a girl was much sought after. She was a nun-like creature by nature, and went to her balls and parties with curious reluctance. Her father and mother shivered lest she should slip from them under the shelter of the veil. They would not let her join her cousin, Cecilia O'Donnell, at her convent school, New Hall, in Essex, where the nuns have sanctified a haunted old palace of Henry VIII. They had a governess for the two little daughters, and kept Mary as much as possible from nunnish influences.

However, there were stirrings in the young soul towards a life for God alone. How far this was helped by her friendship with Catharine M'Auley, the

foundress of the Order of Mercy, who shall say? Her other dearest friend, the friend of the twain, Fanny Tighe, went away to the Presentation Convent at Galway. Mary desired passionately to follow the one or the other, but things were ruled differently for her. When visiting in Dublin, she brought her wishes to a very saintly and wise priest, Dean Meyler, of Westland Row, one who had a peculiar reputation as a guide of souls. To her bitter grief and disappointment, the holy old man told her decisively that she had no real call to the religious life, and bade her as decisively to take up her place in the world. He was right. God meant her not for a nun, but for a mother of nuns. Her four daughters all entered religion; so her obedience seems to have been fully blest.

After an interval she married with full heart and inclination. Bernard Fallon was all a girl could love —gay, sweet-tempered, handsome, and only too generous and trusting. As the children came, and while they were all together, there was great happiness, despite a cloud of money troubles on the horizon. A very holy and wise bishop had said of Mary Ffrench that she was the strongest-natured woman he ever knew, though she had the simplicity of a child. This strength of nature gave Mary Fallon self-control and sweetness when her children's fortunes and her own were melting in the air. I doubt that she had other troubles except monetary; the love of husband and wife seems to have been singularly

full and sweet. But to a nervous, sensitive nature like hers, the trouble was a heavy strain; her temperament, without her strong soul and sweet heart, had all the elements of a break-down in it.

She was a worshipful mother. Her living children, after all the years and decades, cling to her memory with passionate tenderness and praise. She let no one else usurp her mother's duties. She knew all the sweetness of tending the children herself. She nursed them through illnesses; with her own deft fingers she made their pretty frocks; she was never a night away from them. No wonder that she was the pivot on which their lives turned.

They had all the pleasures of happy country children. Sometimes they were at the sea, enjoying the new world with young eagerness. At home was the lovely country. Their wise mother thwarted them in none of their lawful delights. They might keep what pets they would. Each child had a garden which they dug and planted at will, or neglected if they would. Their schooling was made pleasant to them. They all inherited a love of music from their father, and they began to be musicians before they began to read. "I should like," said Bernard Fallon when his eldest little daughter was four, "some day to hear my little girl play the *Adeste Fideles* in church." It was characteristically Irish. High and low, this people intuitively "seek first the kingdom of God and its glory."

The little ones in this atmosphere of faith and love

lived too by admiration. Not only were the father and mother the dearest folk in the world, but there was a governess, Miss Murphy, the rarest and finest specimen of her kind; and there was an old nurse, Nelly, who stood out, of all the trusty servants, by her faithfulness and affection. It was a little world in which all were friends. Nelly especially loved "Jenny," as the mother affectionately called her gentle little child. Long afterwards, when Mother Xaveria was on her bed of long dying, she would ask for drinks that Nelly used to make for her when she was a child, and would go over incidents of that far-away time with sighs and laughter full of pathos.

On that deathbed the mention of her mother's name made her shiver with emotion. The love between mother and daughter was extraordinarily close and sweet. Mrs. Fallon had schooled herself strenuously to put out of sight any distinction of love for her children. But Jenny, angelically fair, rosy and white and golden as a Florentine angel, shy and gentle as a bird, one could not see the mother with her and not know where her heart was pinned fastest. From babyhood the little one trotted by her mother's gown, her small fingers in the mother's hand, her little feet trying to keep pace with the longer steps. She loved her mother with an intensity very rare in young children. Once on a cold night she crept out of her bed in the nursery and to her sleeping mother's side, and was discovered kissing passionately each finger of the hand lying outside

the coverlet. Mrs. Fallon had the most beautiful hands in the world, but few lovely hands have had such devout caresses.

Once the mother said half-wistfully, "What would you do, Jenny, if I were to die?" "Oh," said the little daughter with tragic intensity, "I should go down into the grave with you."

She inherited her mother's obedience and charity. Recovering from an illness in which she had been debarred solid food, she had that craving we all know in such a case. A piece of bread which was lying near her seemed to her exquisitely desirable, but though she clutched it in her hot little hand, she never tasted it till her mother, who was absent, returned and gave her leave to eat it.

Once the devoted mother went into voluntary exile from her little flock. A kitchen-maid, infirm of temper and not lovable at the best of times, had taken a virulent fever. Mrs. Fallon had her removed to a house some distance from the home, and there, with the aid of Nelly Kilbride, nursed her through the whole illness. She gave her all personal care, lifting her in her arms and administering her medicines: like many another of Christ's followers, she saw in the poor rough woman, fever-racked, the members of Christ.

So when the famine and cholera came, and Jane, staying at her grandmother's, was interdicted distributing alms to the starving, lest the disease should be among them, it was her mother's daughter cried out,

half-playfully, all imploringly, "Oh, *do* let me go! *do* let me go! If you don't, I'll just *rub* to them, and then I'm sure to get the fever."

However, this was long enough after. Jenny was only a mite of seven when the trouble reached its culminating point. Money was scarce, and the home had to be parted with, and there were long and anxious consultations as to a sojourning-place, where little money would go farthest. Besides, the children had to get their schooling, and this must be thought of in the selection of a new country. Finally Germany was decided upon, and Bernard Fallon set out in order to select a house where his family could join him, and so find the strange country less unhomelike. He had a faithful servant with him, James Monaghan by name, one of that rare type of servants now almost extinct. He had been in old Mrs. Fallon's employment, and fairly worshipped the young master and his children. He used to nurse the little ones with more than a woman's tenderness, and a skill born of such love. The poor young mother had decided not to follow too hastily: there was so much to be finished up and so many preparations made for the children. So she kissed her husband in the grey of a winter morning in the year 1839, and they parted with heavy hearts, but scarcely forecasting the more terrible parting which was to come soon. After a time the little household followed, making the journey by fly-boat, that is to say, by the little packets which navigated the canals

in those days. Railways have done away with that leisurely method of travelling. No more can one float all day between avenues of lime and elm, with cattle standing at gaze in the green pastures, and the hills blue on the horizon. No more can a youngster taste the delightful danger of sinking in the locks, with the walls of green water rising up to float one into the world again. The canals now are only used for the conveyance of bricks and turf and grains, and such commodities, which are towed along by a patient horse, deeply ruminating. The little Fallons were too pleased with their first peep into the world to be depressed by the sorrowful occasion of their leaving home. It was all delightful to them in the short winter days; the boat itself, the passengers, with their new faces, the stretch of country, which scarcely altered in the pale sunshine of the short day, for the fly-boat travelled its forty miles daily, with credit to itself.

By and by the travellers arrived at Portobello, with its great hotel, that since has served many purposes, stately across the paved quay, and the hilly street going down citywards.

There were preliminaries to be observed, passports to be taken, and such like, and officialdom moved slowly in the thirties, as now. The children played up and down the great passages of the big Dublin house they were staying in, and had not time for the novelty of the streets to miss the dear country. Meanwhile the poor mother was in heavy trouble. News had come

from Boulogne that Bernard Fallon had lain down there under his troubles in an attack of brain-fever. Those days of waiting must have been piteous and heart-breaking to her. With the prescience of true love—which indeed is often falsely prescient of evil—she seemed to accept at once the trial in its fullest. One comfort she had, that he was in such tender and faithful hands.

Again the sea, and then the railway bearing them swiftly through green country and murky manufacturing towns, plunging through a world full of smoky furnaces by night, and then daylight breaking over red-tiled farmhouses and pastoral prosperous country, such as we scarcely know in Ireland: a hurried rush through foggy London, and then the sea again. The children were enchanted till they got tired and slept, and a relief it must have been to Mary Fallon, carrying heavily her prophetic heart. They were too young to have any knowledge of her fears, and were babbling perpetually of the dear papa they were coming closer to every moment.

At Boulogne in the winter night—it was the 4th of January 1840—Monaghan met them. His news was of the worst. After the terrible tediousness of the custom-house was got through, the poor wife fled distractedly to her husband. The children have a wild memory of it, of being carried in such haste and trouble through the foreign streets. When they saw the kind father, he was in raging fever, and past recognising

them. He had had every care: the doctors had exhausted their skill: poor Monaghan had nursed him as a mother her babe: a devoted Irish priest, brought by his good servant, had done for him all religion can do. He was dying of trouble and heartbreak; but happily, with his soul made, as the Irish say, and the frank and loyal spirit ready to go before its Maker.

On the morning of the Epiphany, when the children opened their eyes on a troubled world, they saw the kind governess bathed in tears. "How is papa?" they cried. "Better," she said, with that gentle euphemism which must seem for ever terrible to one to whom it has been used in this context. It was when they knelt to their prayers she told them, clasping their hands and lifting them up in supplication to the Father of all for the dear father who had loved them so well. Then the stormy grief of childhood broke, and for a day or two they wept themselves dry and sick of tears. Bernard Fallon was laid in the little graveyard outside the walls of Boulogne-sur-Mer, and his widow took up the burden of life alone in a strange land.

She met great kindness. The good Irish priest was charity itself to her. He brought her warm-hearted friends, ladies of the old nobility, with all that delicate and gracious breeding which the old Catholic aristocracy of France possesses most perfectly. Her beauty and trouble took their hearts. They showed her exquisite kindness, and for a little while she was content

to rest in it. Then, too, she had her two faithful friends and dependants, and she had her lovely children. At first she thought of fleeing home with them to her own land and their father's; but after a time her brave heart and well-balanced head asserted themselves.

That cousin of the old New Hall days, Cecilia O'Donnell, was now married and living at St. Omer. The town sanctified as the training school of the English martyrs—the walled town surrounded by marshes, where Mary Ward, ill in body and sorely troubled in mind, went up and down as a lay-sister, questing among the market-folk—this was the town where, warmly besought by her loving cousin, widowed Mary Fallon brought her little brood. The golden-haired Irish child, who was one day to wear Mary Ward's cloak of office, had no more knowledge of her name then than of her own destiny. Yet it was strange that in St. Omer the future Superior-General of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin was to pass her innocent girlhood, all ignorant of the associations its stones could have told her had they cried out.

CHAPTER VII.

GIRLHOOD AND SCHOOL-DAYS.

THE record of life in the old French town reads uneventfully. There are only for witnesses the brother and sisters, who were children themselves and absorbed in the things of children. Jane Fallon's was a quiet and reserved nature, and the mother who shared her thoughts is not here to testify to them. The little girls went to school to the Convent of the Perpetual Adoration, whose Abbess, Madame de St. Mechtilde, still lives, though she draws nigh her century. At school Jane was loved for her gentleness. She was not at all an ecstatic child, wrapped away from this earth. On the contrary, she overflowed with bright health and spirits, which, so far from making her a madcap out of times, only made her more soundly sweet to the core. She was crowned with white roses each year of her time at school. There are different distinctions, but this pretty "Prix de Sagesse" is for the one who is best in all things, whose average of achievement and conduct is highest, and who, besides, is best loved by her schoolmates.

There is no one so quick as your school boy or girl

to detect an impostor, and the mask of a prig or a hypocrite is very soon pulled off by them, no matter how well it may impose on superiors. Yet real honest goodness is quite as quickly recognised. Jane could be the merriest of them in the playground, but at work or prayer daily the soul grew stronger to rule the healthy life of the body. The children teased her, as other children did at Rathfarnham later, disordering her desk or cupboard, which she kept with instinctive neatness, in order to see how she would take it. Her sweetness—for she only set things right without a murmur—brought them to quick repentance, and won all the honest love of their hearts.

In vacation-time, as her brother tells us, she gave rein to her ardent spirits. St. Omer is a delightful place, with great ruins full of story, where children could play hide-and-seek, or dream in quietness if they were imaginative. Within the precincts of the old Abbey of St. Bertin lies buried Childeric III., the last of the Merovingian kings, and of the line of Clovis, that fierce and splendid warrior, who longed sore that he had been at Calvary with half a legion of his Franks to rescue the Christ. The noble Gothic church which sprung up here in the Middle Ages was sacked in the '93; through its long aisles the children loved to wander, and to climb, if they could escape their Argus-eyed governess, the little towers and broken piles of masonry. Hard by St. Omer is Kerouanne, the fortress of Fredegonde, near which was fought in another

period "the Battle of the Spurs." Agincourt lies some miles to the south, and west of the city is "the Field of the Cloth of Gold." It is still a town of great ecclesiastical pretensions, having besides its cathedral two stately old churches.

The children also loved to wander by the market-gardens, half-floating in the marshes outside the city walls. The traffic is by boats on little canals, and the quaint villages and fields of vegetables seem tethered in the sluggish water. Or, again, there are solid highways radiating from the city, long, straight, interminable, with boulevards of twisted trees leaning one way as the wind has willed it. On such walks the children ran wild, racing, jumping—and Jane was an adept at such tomboy tricks—chasing the butterflies, to the dismay of the staid governess. There were so many slow little streams to be leaped over; generally the graceful child cleared them like a bird. Once, as her sister remembers, she landed in midstream, and sat there unable to stir because of her shrieks of wild laughter, while the poor governess ran up and down the bank wringing her hands.

Sometimes they went with Nelly Kilbride to the market, and this was an exquisite treat. Faithful Nelly had followed them from Ireland, and taken them all into her charge as if they were so many babies. The household cares she assumed entirely, and would let no one interfere with her prerogative. Nelly had a cordial dislike of foreigners and their ways, and would

hold no more commerce with them than she could help: their tongue she would never learn, and the word or two which necessity forced upon her she keenly resented. Her manner of bargaining was this. To the market-woman, white-capped, black-eyed, gold-earringed, behind her fruit and vegetables, enter Nelly. "Combien?" she would say, unceremoniously selecting what she desired. "Quinze sous, madame," would reply the *marchande*. "*Quinze*, musha!" Nelly would echo scornfully; "I'll give you *cinq*," holding out her five fingers to assist the Frenchwoman's comprehension. Then the pair would grow angry, the one in furious French turning to Flemish, the other going off into Irish in her excitement. However, it always ended in an amicable settlement and Nelly getting her reduction; but while it lasted the young Fallons found it delicious.

When Jane had a bad illness in those French years, Nelly was invaluable. She seemed scarcely to need sleep or rest or food. Her watchfulness was untiring. The child went very low. Priest and doctor had ceased to hope for her recovery. She had been anointed and received the Holy Communion. Nelly and the hired nurse sat by her during the hours of the short summer night when the mother was overcome by fatigue. The life fluttered on her lips as frail as that of the summer moths that lived their hour in the mock sunlight of the candle-flame. Her breathing had almost ceased: she lay with pure lids down, and thin hands quiet after

long unrest: yet, strangely enough, she was vividly conscious, though as unable to show life as if she were in a catalepsy. She heard the talk that went on beside her bed. Nelly, with all an Irish peasant's curious pleasure in the pomps of death, droned over the way the dead child was to lie, with white draperies to her feet and the crucifix in her hands, and roses and lilies heaped about her. All this with vivid detail the child could repeat long after.

However, she was not "to make a beautiful corpse," as the peasants say, just yet. Her mother was wearying Heaven with prayers for this dearest of her children; day and night, and, one may well believe, in her heavy dreams, went the petition, bitter and urgent, which has gone up from so many stricken hearts since the world began. At earliest dawn, she whom the beggars had come to call "the holy lady in black," was waiting patiently by the Cathedral door. As soon as it was opened, she crept to her favourite place, near the altar and below a banner of the Sacred Heart. There, while the rose and grey of dawn widened to scarlet and amber, she wrestled for her child's life, pled hard with a speechless insistency which the Lord hearkened to after long prayer; and who shall measure the faith that held her there, when her mother's instinct would have had her watching the shadow lighten or deepen on the dying face? She returned, and lo! the crisis was passing, the life was fluttering back again to the pale lips. Certainly Jane Fallon was the child of many prayers.

She recovered steadily from that hour. Her convalescence was slow and long, her illness having been so bad a one, but it was not tedious. A French lady of rank, the wife of the commandant of troops in St. Omer, had a great affection for this charming child, and used to delight in spending hours of every day with her. A great delight to the pair, so curiously assorted as to ages, was training little wild birds. The little sisters and brothers of St. Francis of Assisi sometimes distinguish an especially gentle human soul by forgetting to be wild and afraid. This was the case with the sweet-hearted child and the woman who had the heart of a child. Together they taught the birds all manner of pretty tricks, and there were no lonely hours for the child for whom the birds sang and played all day. Once there was consternation, when the very cleverest scholar of them all flew out of an open window, and perched himself on a roof-top in view, enjoying the sunshine and freedom, and with his bright eyes full of defiance. But the sparrows who were not accomplished resented him, and set upon him rudely, so that he was very glad to come flying back to his gentle little mistress, who loved him but the better for his escapade.

Once the little invalid was draped all in white and rolled in shawls, and so carried to the Cathedral to be confirmed by Monseigneur de la Tour d'Auvergne, prince of the Church and the land.

Two years later there was clash of revolutions all

over Europe, which troubled St. Omer long before Louis Philippe abdicated and the barricades were up in Paris streets. The '48 sent many an exile flying home to insular safety. For months before the thrones fell the omens were sufficiently alarming. At night wild crowds paraded the streets carrying torches, which made the dark lurid, and chanting in hoarse voices the Marseillaise. Then in the night would ring out the *rappel* calling the soldiers back to barracks. The air was full of war and omens of war, and the exiles of Erin began to feel affrighted, and long for their own shores, where indeed trouble and pain were brooding darkly, but where they should be at home and among friends.

There was scarcely a dissentient voice when home-returning was mooted. Preparations were pushed forward as quickly as possible, as one might expect when Nelly was majordomo. Poor Nelly, who shall come no more into my story, was relieved at last of the fear of dying abroad and finding a foreign grave, where there would be no rest for her untravelled heart. Her Gaelic songs, which usually sounded strange and mournful, became jiglike in their sprightliness. Sweet were her anticipations of the smell of the mountain air, and of running across the brown bogs barefooted, as she used to do longsyne; for she could not realise in this new transport that she had grown old. She found her Irish grave sure enough, but she had happily a good many years of life in which to pose as a travelled

woman to the friends and kinsfolk who had scarcely fared a mile beyond their own parishes.

In the February of '48, with the citizen-king's flight things grew quite unbearable. The people was king for the time, and asserted itself as roughly as young democracy usually does. Able-bodied strollers of a martial type demanded alms, and elbowed quiet folk in the street with a veiled menace. Sinister rumours were afloat that trade with England would be cut off, that money remittances would be intercepted, that Louis Napoleon would call the nation to arms to avenge Waterloo. So the Fallons left France as quietly and quickly as possible, saying farewell to the old town which had been Mary Ward's place of trial.

There were many friends they left behind with pain. There was one especially whom I must name because he influenced Jane Fallon so strongly. This was a saintly priest, the Abbé Gruel, who afterwards became a Jesuit. With a ripe and prophetic judgment, he had named Jane Fallon "cette âme prédestinée," and had watched over her spiritual growth with a carefulness the greater because he believed her made for higher ends than most of us. He had the curious quiet persuasiveness which was so remarkable in his spiritual daughter years after. Mother Xaveria's quiet look out of the pure eyes and the delicate arguments, tinged with a certain quaint humour, which irresistibly impelled one to obey her, were not acquired certainly, but perhaps were strengthened in her by the example of like

qualities in one she revered as a saint. An instance of this good priest's persuasiveness was this. There came to the Fallons a good Irish lady, most noble and sweet and charming, who had fled the land she loved so dearly because she was unable any longer to bear the sight of the famine and all the suffering which culminated in the year '48 in Ireland. She was on her way to Italy till things should be brighter at home. She was so far from being selfish or careless, that she had done all in her power to alleviate the suffering about her, but at last, panic-stricken and overcome with pain, she had fled away from it all. The Abbé on hearing this, urged her in his gentle and almost shy way to go back again, and do all that lay in her to succour her people. It was only a phrase of admonition, but it reached this woman's heart so keenly, that the next day saw her with Mrs. Fallon begging through the streets of the town for the famine-stricken Irish; and as soon as she could, she was on her return voyage, to begin a life henceforth devoted to charity. The questing was not unprofitable, we may be sure, remembering how generous an almoner France was in those days to Ireland. When Bishop Dupanloup quested for the same purpose in Nôtre Dame, the sympathy was so great that whole purses were emptied in the collecting boxes, the ladies tore off rings and bracelets, and heaped them so that the jewels went clattering to earth with a loud rattle.

The Abbé Gruel was the last friend to bid the Fallons

good-bye. On the voyage from Calais to Dover the boiler of the boat burst, and there was nigh to be an end to Jane's story. The children slept through the uproar of the accident, and it was characteristic of Mrs. Fallon's brave and generous spirit that she let them sleep on while living the tense hour of danger, fully alive to it, and suffering great terror for her children.

They had come from one cauldron to another. In London thirty thousand special constables were being hastily enrolled to protect the city from the Chartists, who were encouraged by events on the Continent, and had grown daring in speech and demand. In Dublin the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and every dead wall was hung with posters describing the appearance of some Young Irelander who was "wanted." The city was in commotion. Every hour brought a new arrest, and the country was under martial law. The Fallons went home to the West of Ireland, where Jane stayed with her aunt and godmother. Things gradually quieted, and despite the sadness, which they did their best to alleviate, the young girl found much joy in the summer-time and the green country. She was out of doors much, riding unbroken colts bare-backed, and scampering over hill and dale. In this last year of hers in the free world she enjoyed life keenly and exquisitely, as those have so often done who have been willing to relinquish their freedom for the servitude of Christ.

In the spring of 1849 Mrs. Fallon placed her young

daughters at school at Rathfarnham. Here, as elsewhere, Jane was to take the lead, even of her sisters, who followed her so closely and loved her so well. The young girls, with their pretty French manners and foreign ways, their charming faces and figures, their acquirements, which their mother had taken care should be solid as well as ornamental, took the head of the school naturally. Jane, however, though not the eldest of the Fallons, was made President of the Children of Mary, the most honourable of posts, and head of the school. Her brother remembers her at a school-concert, pretty and sedate, singing to her guitar, and afterwards recalls how Mother Teresa Ball, looking like a queen, called the girl to her side, and stroked her golden head with singular affection and approval. For all her honours, she never seemed to excite envy. She was too sweet, and it was not a sweetness which had not fire and spirit behind it, as any one could see looking at her beautiful eyes. She did all her work with a great single-mindedness. Once she was overheard, doing some little task which kept her apart, saying over to herself abstractedly a little French rhyme which consecrated all things to God.

They crowned her May Queen that year. It was a distinction for the best-loved girl in the school, and there was but one vote cast against her—her own. When Mother Teresa Ball heard this she said, "That child will one day rule our Institute,"—a curious prophecy, for Jane's thoughts at this time

were all turned towards her beloved Benedictines at St. Omer.

When she was still a child at school there, with a child's mystical longings after the religious life, she had desired to be a nun of an Order which, under the patronage of the Mother of God, devoted itself to the training of children. She knew not if such an Order existed, and the nun-friend to whom she gave her confidence knew of none such. The Benedictines, indeed, seemed to fulfil such a qualification, for very beautifully they have made the Queen of Heaven their Prioress. A great statue of her is in the Prioress' place; in the statue's hands the keys of the convent are placed every evening after compline. However, God led His child to the home and place He had appointed for her.

Her Mistress of Schools, Mother Berchmans, was a notable woman, little enough resembling in some ways that meek young patron of hers who was born at the sign of the "Great and Little Moon" at Diest, in Flanders, of a March day three hundred years ago. She was of the practical type which is so enormously valuable in a religious community, where all must not be dreamers and seers of visions. She was everything in turns, and a brave financier and administrator. In her hands the purse, often enough thin in those young days of a new foundation, seemed like the widow's cruse of oil which had no diminishing. She was right-hand to Mother Teresa Ball. Her she

loved overwhelmingly, as may well happen when two have stripped themselves of outside human comfort, and are joined together in a friendship half human, half spiritual, in which the concentrated love of the heart spends itself freely. When Mother Teresa Ball died, Mother Berchmans' whole nature changed. The briskness and brightness were changed for a great gentleness. No doubt her heart went heavily on earth, having lost that sisterly prop and stay, though no duty of hers suffered, and her tears were put out of sight. Only on the anniversary of that death-day each year her trouble was let loose, and in an agony of desolateness she sobbed and prayed in her cell during hours which had once been so dark to her. A young sister who timidly stole in once, frightened by her sobbing, she prayed not to be shocked at her, not to think that she did not love the Will which we must all love to submit to. In her old age she went away in cheerful obedience to Gibraltar, to take command of the mission there, and nearly died of the climate and the unhealthy house and the sweltering school, where, tired and faint, the nuns stood all day at their classes. She was ordered home, but characteristically she first won from the Bishop his promise that the nuns should be removed at once to a healthy house.

However, all this was long after, and now Mother Berchmans, with her hands happily full, was superintending the ever-growing school. She entered with eagerness into all the pretty pageantry the Fallon girls,

fresh from magnificent religious ceremonies in France, suggested. There were great occasions that year in Rathfarnham. Dr. Murray and all his priests, with a great concourse of laity, came out to see the Corpus Christi procession, with its angels winged with frosted silver, and the babies strewing roses from their dainty baskets, as the pretty *cortège* wound its way through the lovely walks. At Christmas there were the usual plays. In one, when Jane Fallon, as one of the leading characters, spoke of a secret and a departing, Mother Berchmans' laughter excited the quick curiosity of the children. Even Jane's sisters did not know. At midnight, when the school was called for midnight Mass, Jane was missing. Of course there was great excitement, but not for long. When they trooped into the church, with its Christmas decorations of holly and ivy, its flare of candles, golden in the night, its little crib, with the Bambino amid the hay, and His mother and the shepherds, there was a meek little figure in the midst of the nuns' choir—Jane, black-robed and veiled, flushed and happy, more eager with pleasure than any bride of this world. "It almost broke my heart," writes the sister who was soon to follow her. We hear nothing of the sad heart of the mother, who was giving her best-beloved child to God, and who was to give up each of her young daughters as they came to womanhood. Only God knows the bitterness of such willing sacrifices. But for the child who had remained unspotted from the world there was no grief in bidding

it good-bye. She was like the dove, eager to flee away and be at rest, and He who calls as piercingly sweet as the lover, His mystical prototype in the inspired Eastern song, heard her answer swift and joyful, "My Beloved is mine and I am His, who feedeth among the lilies."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE NOVICESHIP AND AT LOUGH COOTER CASTLE.

FRONTING the notebook which gives me scanty details of Jane Fallon's noviciate is a photograph of her, which shows her the stillest and most rapt-looking woman one could imagine, in the shading of her veil and the framework of her stiff coif. The French vivacity which the school-day notes dwell upon is here all vanished: it is as if a hand had rested upon her, compelling her into that ineffable calm, snatching her away suddenly into a vision of paradisal peace. An old nun who died before her used to recall her look at that midnight Mass of 1849, her eyes that saw visions, her clear skin, transparent "as if a light were behind it." She never forgot that midnight Mass and its graces, and for the thirty-eight Christmases that followed she offered each midnight Mass in thanksgiving for her call to the religious life. A postulant, I may say for the benefit of non-Catholic readers, goes very quaintly attired. She wears a black gown; it may be a remnant of her worldly days, so it be devoid of frills and furbelows: a tight-fitting silk

cap covers the silkier hair; from this depends a straight veil of black gauze. She is in that intermediate stage which has not yet quite renounced the world, and she has more pathos in her look because she lacks the other worldliness with which the nun's habit will endow her.

Jane Fallon going to and fro in those last days of her partial liberty must have looked a little like the Madonna when she went to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth, and helped her in the homely work while she pondered over in her heart the great things God had done for her. Jane Fallon loved the thought of the Mother of God and dwelt incessantly upon it, so that in the end folk used to say how she reminded them of "that Blessed Mary pre-elect." Her Novice Mistress, Mother M. Gonzaga, a most holy soul, said of her that one of her great virtues was her exactness, so that when she had swept her cell, she left no single particle of dust which could be removed. It is on her knees at the sweeping that I like to picture this radiant-faced creature. She would know little probably of George Herbert, but the thought of the old poet would be hers—

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
> Makes that and the action fine."

And she would remember, no doubt, how Jesus had sanctified labour at the carpenter's bench, and how

Joseph had trained Him to handle saw and plane, and how Mary had waited on them, preparing the simple Eastern meals, and making the poor house daintily pure and clean for the Son whose refinement was learnt in heaven.

Mary, Mother of God, is the ideal set before all Catholic women. From their childhood they are taught to weigh their actions by her modesty and humility and patience. She pleased God so perfectly as to be chosen for the highest office He ever conferred upon a human creature. Being human, though dowered with unspeakable graces, she is not so out of sight that one may not, as a pool mirrors a star, try to imitate her. So it is that some of her loveliness descends upon her copyists. A great poet's picture of her suggests as well some of the Madonnas of this earth in their young girlhood—

> "This is that Blessed Mary, pre-elect
> God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
> Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
> Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
> Profound simplicity of intellect,
> And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
> Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity,
> Strong in grave peace; in pity, circumspect."

Mother Gonzaga, of whom I have spoken as Jane Fallon's Novice Mistress, was a soul such as one reads of in "The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi." She was but thirty years of age when this new spiritual daughter came to her, and no doubt the

simplicity which marked her character fitted her well for the charge of souls like to be over-anxious. "Dear, holy, earnest Mother Gonzaga," writes one who was a school-girl under her, going on to tell, with a hint of laughter in the recital, how the youngsters rebelled against sitting back-board fashion during religious instruction, partly for penance, partly for discipline, or being asked to voluntarily dock themselves of an hour's recreation, with the intention that a sinner might be atoned for by the sacrifice, or a soul in purgatory relieved. Your growing boy or girl is generally the most unspiritual of human beings. "Shades of the prison-house begin to close" upon them, to quote Wordsworth. They have lost memory of "the trailing clouds of glory," and they have not yet learned in the hard school of the world, which forms us as the sculptor with his chisel hews the marble into fine and etherealised lines. I smile over Mother Gonzaga, remembering how just such a "Mother," in my own convent school-days, used to plead with us to forego a drink of water and offer it, for that a drop might perhaps lie on the tongue of one parched for heaven in purgatory. How we grumbled, greedy little wretches, if we were not openly insubordinate; and we certainly did not suffer from thirst, but only from resentment of what we thought an unwarranted request.

Mother Gonzaga's novice was not like to be highly amused over her devotions, as were the profane youngsters in the school-room. One of the school

children, while Mother Gonzaga was Mistress of Schools, used to walk with her to say the Rosary; she took them in turns, and, all unconscious of their humorous appreciation, she lifted her eyes and beat her breast, and smiled to herself over the sweet thoughts that came to her in her meditations. She was far too rapt away and simple to be conscious, and if she had known of the amusement, it would probably have only grieved her on the score of its unseemliness. However, even those young monkeys felt her intense holiness, and loved her greatly. She was always avid, even with the children, of discussing spiritual topics, and would listen to them and approve, as if she were the child and they the grown folk far advanced in the culture of the Spirit. Mother Gonzaga had the simplicity of a young child added to the heart and brain of a most holy and efficient woman.

We get a pretty glimpse of Mary Xaveria, as I shall henceforth call her, in a few words of one who was a school-fellow of hers, and afterwards a sister in religion. Convent school-girls in every clime have a way of giving a very innocent and lovely worship either to a nun or an elder girl to whom they can look up. Oh, those school-girl passions, with their thrills and chills, their little sentimentalities, their real warmth and depth of feeling! One is young and thoroughgoing then, and loves and grieves, giving all one's mind and heart to it. Happy convent school-girls, who work off their first effervescence so prettily and harmlessly!

Sometimes an affection so formed will never be chilled by the world, but, when two stay within the convent walls, will be transmuted to a sisterly love and loyalty which may make for each her greatest happiness under heaven. *My* first love went away to a convent in Portugal, and never returned. I cried over her going for a year before. No one since has had such a glamour for me. I have scarcely ever since felt so absolutely happy as once when she returned unexpectedly; it was a cold winter morning, and some one told me when I was dressing myself shiveringly by gas-light for seven o'clock Mass. It made the whole world warm and gay for me when I realised that she had come. Despite that I had watered my bread with my tears, the scars of her going healed quickly, and the correspondence which I had vowed should last for ever died out within the year.

However, Mary Xaveria's friend followed her to the convent. Here is the bit I have been kept from quoting by my personal reminiscences. This was after Mary Xaveria had assumed the habit and white veil, and while she was engaged in the school-work: "Every evening when coming up from the refectory, I used to wait last, and when the other girls had filed into the school-room, having made their salute to Sister Xaveria as she stood at the door, I used to kneel down, and she would put her hand upon my head, with a blessing. At that time I had not the least idea this was a practice among the nuns: some feeling of love and

reverence impelled me to it. . . . I wish some one could tell of her school-life. I was in the third when she was in the first division, and though my heart is full of memories of her, I don't think I can say much. . . . I cannot tell how I first began to care for her. I remember so well her entrance on Christmas Eve, and my admiration of her that night; then my delight when she came back to the school as a novice to teach French, and how carefully I used to prepare my exercises and lessons in order to please her, and how glad her praise used to make me. Once for our French reading-book she brought the Life of St. John Berchmans, and when I was reading to her the description of the manner in which he composed himself to sleep, with his hands crossed on his breast, the crucifix at his head, and his lips repeating the childish rhyme which gives the guardian angel and patron saints their places about one's bed, she said suddenly, 'That is what you do, is it not?' I was startled and said 'No.' 'Well, you will begin,' she said, with that persuasiveness which almost commanded, and I did begin. During the recreation I used never to leave her side, and many a little word about God and my soul which she whispered in those hours sank deeply into my heart, and made me feel how worthless everything is except to live for God."

Here is the story of how she fought her terror of death—and how overpowering such a terror is only those who themselves experience it can realise—for

the sake of sisterly love. There was a nun lying dead in the house, and a young novice, equally susceptible of supernatural terrors, was "visitor" for that week. Now the office of "visitor" is after every nun is in her cell to go around all portions of the house, extinguish lights, and see to the fastenings of door and window. This novice was overwhelmed at the thought of having at night and alone to visit the cell where the dead nun was lying, she not having been yet removed to the bier in the midst of the nuns' choir in church. Mary Xaveria, with her fine sympathy, found out this nameless terror, and at once asked and obtained leave to take her sister's place as visitor for that night. She went up alone to the cell, which was at the top of the house, and entering, knelt by the dead nun, and kissed her hands, praying hard at the same time for grace to overcome her fears. She had her reward for this supreme act of charity, for from that hour she experienced no more terror of death or the night.

The same young novice for whom she did this received great help from her in spiritual difficulties. Home-sick, dismayed, and doubting her vocation, she was lifted up and made joyous again by the comfort and advice Mary Xaveria gave her.

Soon after her profession, which is the taking of the solemn vows two years after the clothing, Sister Xaveria went from Rathfarnham for her one absence from its beloved walls. She accompanied Mother Teresa Ball to a new foundation, Lough Cooter, in county Galway,

where she took up at once the position of Mistress of Schools. It was a wrench for her to go, but the parting was not to be for long. Lough Cooter Castle, which belonged to Lord Gort, was purchased cheaply enough when the Encumbered Estates Act had flooded the market with old mansions and family estates. The purchase-money Mrs. Ball paid was £17,000, a mere trifle for the stately house, with its great demesne and pasturage, and its many dependencies, which made the place an estate in itself. It was far too big for the nuns to handle, and though Mrs. Ball, admirable business woman that she was, let some hundreds of acres of the land, and met other difficulties as they presented themselves, she recognised in the end its unsuitability for her purpose, and sold it very unwillingly to Lord Viscount Gough, who, in a still falling market, gave her £3000 over the purchase-money.

However, I am antedating affairs. Sister Xaveria's school-girl worshipper tells us: "The evening before her departure for Lough Cooter she was with us at recreation. As usual, I was at her side, and when going down the Beech Walk, I told her I had an old pair of gloves belonging to her, but as she was going away, I supposed I must restore them, but I begged her to give me something of hers to keep. 'Will you give me something, sister?' I repeated entreatingly. 'I have nothing, Fanny,' she said, looking long at me with that strangely sweet smile of hers. So I got nothing, and went to bed with a sore heart. When

she came back from Lough Cooter, she found me in the noviceship, and a few months after her return she was appointed Mistress of Novices."

At Lough Cooter the nuns started a school, the paucity of educational resources in the West of Ireland at that time being indeed the reason which led Mother Teresa Ball to establish her children there. As is the case with almost every new foundation, there was abundance of hard work. When the school-hours were over, the nuns had their hands full, arranging the neglected great house. Those were the days when the foundress herself, down there for the starting of the young community, with the Mistress of Schools and other important persons in convent life, might be seen in *déshabillé*, for they were provided with but one habit, mounted on ladders, papering, whitening ceilings, and otherwise proving themselves apt colonists. Each one in that busy household had to act the part of Martha as well as of Mary. Sister Xaveria was the youngest nun, and being willing as well, she bore a heavy share of the burden of the day. The Superioress, Mother Concepcion Lopez, one day in the rush and hurry, poured out directions on her tired young assistant which quite failed to reach the overtaxed brain. "My dear," said the Spanish nun with Southern impetuosity, "you have not a particle of memory or understanding." "Have I only, then, one power to my soul, my mother, only my will?" said Mary Xaveria, smiling for all her weariness. "Well, Mary, you have that," the Superioress

answered with compunction, "and *the best of good wills*, my dear."

The stately old park was full of deer. When the nuns went there, the dietary was venison year in and year out, till *toujours* venison became somewhat of a burden. The table appointments were out of keeping with this royal meat, for the gravy was served in the red-clay saucers of geranium pots. Mary Xaveria, lover of the country from her childhood, found many delights in the beautiful place. The castle was perched high amid woods, and looked across the water to islets and rocky crags, with the familiar line of gracious blue hills in the distance which is scarcely ever absent from an Irish landscape. A river flowed through the place, winding its way in and out of earth, now flowing along silver and tranquil, then sliding away underground for a space, to reappear again in a little while: it makes a final descent into the earth within the grounds of Lough Cooter, and is seen no more till it enters the sea at Burren, and gives—so popular tradition says—the delicate flavour to the renowned Burren oysters. A walk in the woods was a lovely recreation for Mary Xaveria, especially when it was with one of her special friends among the Sisters, and with whom she could talk of Him who was nearest to her heart. Sometimes she was happy in having for her companion Mother Teresa Ball, who liked to set the young nun, despite her Mistress-ship of Schools only a girl of twenty-three, to chase the deer, while she herself, with a clever

imitation, lured the dappled silky creatures from their coverts.

The life of a Mistress of Schools is not all cakes and ale. It is to act the mother *pro tem.* to a number of young creatures, diverse and complex, and without the inspiration of the real mother, for all the good-will. Mary Xaveria was as much of a girl as many of her charges, though she was so grave and sweet beyond her years. There were the troublesome children, wild because wildness is considered rather a fine thing, yet sound at the core; there were the sly ones, very willing to let others bear the brunt of their misdeeds; there were the slow ones, good as gold, but sluggish in brain; the clever ones, who gave their tortoise sisters every chance to outstrip them;—one knows all the varieties, and marvels at a girl taking charge of it all. She was very patient, coming day after day to a sullen child, who would not repeat a certain lesson till her will broke down before her weary young teacher's patient strength. She was strong with a wild child, to whom she told certain hard truths, and then cried because they had been so hard to say. She showed divine kindness and charity to a neglected child, whom she washed and dressed in secret, so that none should know the child's condition, and what lovely kindness that was, any one will understand who knows the contemptuous superiority of girls still in their teens. A lay-sister surprised her at her task, and the gentle Mistress of Schools was almost angry that anybody should know.

When Lough Cooter was given up in the August of 1854, Mary Xaveria returned to Rathfarnham, henceforth to be her home. Many of her pupils followed her, for she was greatly beloved, and the fame of her sanctity and sweetness had spread. In the various troubles which arose at Lough Cooter, the complaints of tenants, the difficulties with workmen, the young nun's gentle persuasiveness and charm were invaluable. It was said of her that no matter how dissatisfied a visitor was when he came, after an interview with Sister Xaveria he went away placated and happy.

CHAPTER IX.

MOTHER XAVERIA AS MISTRESS OF NOVICES.

MOTHER TERESA BALL had that unerring intuition so necessary to one in command, which selects almost at a glance the person most fitted for a particular office. Some quality of wisdom, of gravity, of tolerance in Mary Xaveria told the old foundress that here was an ideal Mistress of Novices. Of all offices in convent life, this would seem to be the most difficult and the most weighted with responsibilities. A young creature of twenty-four would indeed seem little suited, because of that youth, to undertake the training of souls in the childhood of a religious life, when they have not yet learned to run alone. But the foundress's instinct was unerring. For a year after Mary Xaveria returned from Lough Cooter, she was employed in lesser offices in the noviciate; for a little she was Assistant-Mistress. The mother watched her keenly, and was so well satisfied, that in April 1855 she was appointed Mistress of Novices. So now behold my nun when most girls are, despite the talk about the early development of women, still very girlish, in charge of the souls of thirty novices and eight postulants.

What love she seems to have won! From the cloud of witnesses it is not easy to select. The noviciate is not always a thornless place, but love seems to have made it bloom like the rose while she was Mother and Mistress. She began with no generalisations. She saw that here were a number of human creatures, all with the one high aspiration, but each as different in nature, as unlike the other though like, as are human faces, or leaves upon an ivied wall, or the evening sky where God sets new pictures every day. Her patience and sympathy stood her in good service, but some, she saw, had little difficulty in the religious life. They were holy and submissive by nature, scarcely tempted, finding the path of perfection not thorny, but level and smooth, like St. Aloysius or St. Stanislaus, whom we look at as beings of another sphere, and turn from to a St. Augustine, who greatly sinned and greatly overcame. These needed little help comparatively from her; but it was the strong-willed and difficult ones she loved. She used to quote a saying of Father Faber's, but not before the untroublesome ones, be sure!—"It is seldom an untroublesome novice makes a subject worth a straw." Because her own will was so well ordered, did not make her less patient with those whose wills had to be bent in the right direction. She was always curiously gentle. Once hearing some one quote a saying of Father Ratisbon's, that we should tear out the ego within us and crush it like a fly, she said, with a quiver of pain, "Oh, no, no; I don't like crush-

ing; we'll have no crushing!" It was not easy for any one to withstand her combined love and patience. Those difficult young folk she would exhort day after day upon the points most necessary with an almost dogged persistence, and apparently no remembrance that she was going over and over old ground, till she began to see that the seed had taken root.

She loved the strong, generous, bright natures. One, whom she called "my wild son, March," and who indeed was very like to create a whirlwind on small provocation, she was especially loving to. One day this audacious young novice, on being asked by the Mother, "Why is it you don't give me as much edification as those others?" replied, "Because I'm not so stupid, dear Mother;" which remark no doubt so tickled Mother Xaveria in her sense of humour that the flippancy went unrebuked. Once when she had rebuked this young nun who loved her, all her tenderness was up in arms. It was all over a china cup with roses, which should have been given to a visitor and was not, and there was a March storm in a teacup. The rebuke was half for her and half for another, more likely to take well a public rebuke if aimed obliquely. Mother Xaveria sent for her dear child to make up with her. "Why didn't you come at once, darling?" she said. "I had to notice the matter, but I wanted to comfort you."

This same young nun—it was she who thought Mother Xaveria's face below the great crucifix the

most beautiful and consoling in the world—must have come in later days, for she is still young. She told me of Mother Xaveria's tolerance, how she, flawless herself, had excuses for every sinner: she loved the sinner though she loathed the sin. She had the most infinite pity, and even comprehension, for sins as foreign to her as to an angel of God. She said so yearningly that it was a little line, and easily overstepped, that separates the just and the unjust. Once she was greatly grieved about a poor lady who had become intemperate, and had been at school at Rathfarnham. "The poor thing," she said, "she was delicate, and I think it must have been to ease pain she first took it. I'm sure she struggled against it, and does yet. And sure we're all weak and foolish." She had pity and comprehension and excuse for all the world except herself.

She had the wisdom, with her novices, of not trying to change them; she took them one by one and studied them, and thought over them, and then tried to cultivate here and prune there, with no violent wrenching to another form of growth. She did not encourage any ideas of exotic sanctity. St. John Berchmans was still her model for her novices. "Why do you like *him* best, dear Mother?" said one of her novices. "Because one can follow him more closely than most other saints," she said; "because he never worked miracles or received miraculous favours; because he kept the rules in his noviceship without breaking them;

because he loved the common life." "Ah!" she would say again, overlooking the strait graves in the cemetery, "many a saint of the common life lies here." And she would go on to tell them of her novices Sister Joseph Davis, Sister Luigi O'Neill Power, two girls who died in the noviciate, and whose young lives must have been as sweet to God as half-opened violets.

Naïve enough were some of the suggestions the Mother made; as, for example, that following a Sister down the corridor or upstairs, the young novice should practise humility by musing within herself how that she was unworthy to walk in her sister's footsteps.

All her spiritual children dwell upon how utterly she lived in the presence of God. One says that to look at her was to realise vividly God's presence. In the choir she knelt immovable, her hands clasped, her eyes lifted, her gaze and posture so rapt, that if she had floated in air like an ecstatic saint, one had scarcely been surprised.

When her novices came to her for admittance, she varied her treatment of them as her knowledge of souls warranted. To one she showed the hard side of the religious life, the affections that must be left outside, the inclinations to be sacrificed, the austerity, the self-denial. When the girl had not quailed before all this, she opened her arms to her. "Well, God loves the cheerful giver," she said. Another, coming with the expectation that, offering herself for an educational order, she would be asked many questions as to her

attainments, was simply asked if she had been a faithful child of Mary.

Once when a timid young novice had broken a beautiful statue, she went to the Mother in tears and trembling. The quick smile reassured her. "Thank God, it wasn't a rule you broke," was the half-playful comment.

Another novice felt the rule of silence hard to keep. One can imagine a kind of nervous craving for speech when there is an ordinance of silence. She brought her difficulty to the Sub-Mistress, who gave her the barren permission to speak when it was absolutely necessary. This didn't help the novice at all, she desiring to be able to speak even out of season; but fortunately Mother Xaveria found out the difficulty, and at once gave her leave to speak whenever she desired. After a little of this wholesome liberty she was quite willing to resume silence of her own accord. Another novice found she couldn't meditate, and the Mother supplied her with a book to be read quietly during meditation, which no doubt did her far more good.

Another novice tells that when any one went to her for advice or assistance, she first lifted one long earnest look to the crucifix, and then turning round with her face clear, gave her counsel rapidly and unhesitatingly.

She treated those children of hers as a wise mother might treat a flock of growing daughters. She was very strict about a dainty neatness in their clothes and

belongings. She liked them to join in the housework, trooping off upstairs, white veil and black veil, to make beds, and dust and set in order; or in summer she hunted them out in the sunshine and sweet air, to pick the fruit for jam-making, to gather flowers, to weed a little when summer rains were bringing up the weeds apace. She liked them to walk well and carry themselves with grace and ease, to be gentle in movement and soft-spoken. She herself was a very model of courtesy, and impressed it constantly on her children. She loved to dwell on our Lord as the true example of Christian courtesy, wondering tenderly whether the poor workmen He had chosen for friends and apostles had not perhaps tried Him sometimes by lack of courtesy.

At recreation the young Mother was as innocently gay as her children, and *how* gay a nun's recreation-time can be, they who have sojourned in a convent know. She loved songs and recitations. One young sister who had a special talent for recitation was a great delight to her. She was so ready to be pleased, and her appreciation was so quick, that the novices were made perfectly happy by her pleasure when they contributed their share to the general entertainment. She seemed to include all in her benignity. Not one in the large circle was overlooked by her kind eyes, which at such a time seemed to overflow with happiness. When a Sister entered with her "Laudetur Jesus Christus!" the bright look flashed out

its welcome for her, and the circle was widened to take her in.

For the bodily comfort and well-being of her children Mother Xaveria cared deeply. She never thought of her own delicate body. The hot drink and the warm jar left by the Infirmarian for her own use she would carry off with delight to one or other of her novices. The House Mistress complained that she could keep nothing in Mother Xaveria's cell: the things were always being handed over to others. Once when she had heard a novice say she had been cold at night, she stripped her bed of its warmest blankets and ran off to tuck them in round her child.

When she was ill with measles, she asked that no confessor should be brought to her unless she was dying, she was so afraid of giving the infection. It was one of many acts of self-sacrifice. Those things which others would count sacrifices were not so to her. To kneel long in her cell with her arms extended like a cross was sweet to her, and she delighted in always rising earliest, and being in her place in choir, rapt in prayer, when the earliest of her novices arrived. "Ah!" says one of them, "our Mother never did anything *second* best."

She never forgot her children when they went out of the noviciate. She followed them with her loving letters, her thoughts, and her prayers. She always seemed to keep a special tenderness for those who had been her novices, and, as one of them notes, if

one had disappointed her, it was only sensible in her added sweetness.

Mother Xaveria had an immense love for children. All children recognised this in her, and when she was dying, a confident little child came and asked that some toy fireworks she had might be let off on the lawn so that Mother Xaveria might see them. And the request was agreed to, for not till life was fled did she cease to be pleased at a child's pleasure. It was not alone the curled darlings her motherly heart went out to. She loved the children of the poor, and desired to be with them in the great poor school Mother Teresa Ball had founded. She used to send the novices in turn to teach Catechism; and though it docked their recreation somewhat, not one but went cheerfully when she sent them with her affectionate "Go, little missionaries!" She loved to get permission for herself and her flock to gather up the red apples from the garden beds and take them to the poor children. Her special pet was a weak and diseased little child covered with sores. She, so dainty and pure, would take this little creature in her arms, and kiss it and yearn over it. She sought it out at its poor home, and by coaxing and bribes procured for it necessary care and attention. Sweet Mother Xaveria! After her death the poor mothers of the little school-children crowded up, begging to see her face before it was hidden away. One rejoiced that the holy hands had been laid on her little one in blessing; another, that the day before her child died it had

lain long in the nun's tender arms. Yet another told how her little girl, dying of consumption, would watch the clock for the hour of Mother Xaveria's attendance in the school, and hasten there to get from her face and her tender words help for an evening and night of pain and weakness.

During those years in the noviciate she had the great sorrow of losing her beloved mother. The strong love that existed between them had been in no way weakened by Mother Xaveria's choice of the convent. As her brother recalls, there was no such cure for lowness or depression in his mother as to suggest a visit to Rathfarnham. Every stone of the building was dear to Mrs. Fallon for her daughter's sake. She loved the trees and the cawing rooks, the hills and the meadows: such things, dear everywhere, took on a new dearness at Rathfarnham. Once mother and daughter met, and sat with close-clasped hands, the world and its worries were shut out. Not that the human did not come in, for the nun had to hear everything about the temporal affairs of friends and relatives, and, as her brother recalls, followed every step of his through school and university, and later, when he took his place by his mother's side, with unfailing and intelligent love and interest.

Mrs. Fallon's death was like the long, pale-gold closing of a September day. She failed quite painlessly and gradually. Her son, recalled from his shooting-party in Mayo, came and watched over her

with a woman's tenderness and assiduity. Her four girls were nuns, but at the end two who were Sisters of Mercy were allowed to come to her. During the long quiet illness her son could always hush her to placid sleep by singing to her a favourite hymn, "Maria sine labe concepta," and he says she must have fallen asleep to dream of heaven, so bright was the spiritual light on her beautiful worn face. "A truly valiant woman!" said emphatically her Jesuit confessor.

Mother Xaveria bore the blow bravely—too bravely; for after fulfilling her duties for a little time, and even appearing at recreation by her own wish, she broke down pitifully, and had to go into solitude with her trouble.

For a little trouble in her children she had exquisite sympathy. Her nature had what some one has defined love to be, "a passionate kindness." She always let grief have its way with her children, asking only the right to comfort them. One whose dear brother had died, she loaded with love and sympathy, and then sent off to her special friend in the noviciate, with an injunction to talk of him all she could, and all she could of her sorrow.

For other troubles than death her sympathy was keen too. Loss of money or position, or such like, which depressed the poor nuns for their dear people outside, awoke her warm concern. Some of the notes are from a poor lady who had made an unhappy marriage, and whose only comfort was to come and pour

out all her sorrows to Mother Xaveria. The Portress had orders never to keep her waiting. No matter who should be denied admission, Mother Xaveria was not to be kept a minute from this poor friend.

Side by side with her office of Mistress of Novices she acted also as assistant to Mother Teresa Ball, whose health in the latter end of the fifties began to fail. From 1855 Mother Xaveria occupied a cell close to the Rev. Mother's. Many a time she was awakened at night by an attack of weakness of the Mother-General. She would go down through the dark house for needed remedies, administer them, and watch by the bedside till she was no longer needed. Then she would be in her place in choir first as usual in the morning, and those vigils were only revealed afterwards accidentally.

She was twenty-four when she took up the dual office. She could scarcely have got through such a burden laid on young shoulders without the aid of such friends as the Jesuit Fathers Sturzo and Jones, and more especially Father Tom Burke, the great Dominican. He was governing his own flock of novices in Tallaght, and so was all the better fitted to give kindly advice and wisdom to the girl-mistress. He gave retreats to the novices and the school-children as well as to the community. He inaugurated the annual Ladies' Retreat, which has since attained such great dimensions. He took upon himself many of the worldly affairs of the community, giving time and care to the

unravelling of difficult business. He used to drop in at times unexpectedly, first lifting up their hearts with one of his soul-stirring exhortations; then doffing the saint, as he knew how to do, he was the exquisite humourist, lighting the convent up with laughter.

Before her time came to leave the noviciate for the Mistress-ship of Schools, her dearest friends were dead or scattered. Her own dear mother was gone. Mother Teresa Ball, whom she had served faithfully and loved dearly, and who had honoured her by giving her offices of responsibility far disproportionate to her youth, had died after months of suffering, and her young assistant was not with her, to her own deep grief. Father Sturzo was in Australia. "Ah!" said he years after, when he heard of Mother Xaveria's death, "she was a saint when I knew her." Father Jones was dead. Father Tom Burke was far away in Rome. Mother Xaveria, who had chosen the dying life, saw one after another of the friends God had given her taken away with cheerfulness and with sweetness, and loving God's will better than her own, would not permit even prayers to be offered by others that her last special friend should return out of Italian exile.

CHAPTER X.

MOTHER XAVERIA AS MISTRESS-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS.

MOTHER XAVERIA left those loving children of hers in the noviciate with real sadness of heart. The week before she said good-bye to an office in which she had so much loved and been beloved, the aspirations on her lips in the instructions to the novices ran all one way—the way of resignation and acceptance of a cross, "Lord, enable us to do your will whatever it may cost us!" "Lord, give us generous hearts!" "Lord, prepare us for the work that lies before us." Her children of the noviciate were just entering upon their eight days' retreat. She knew it was a blow awaited them in her going, and she dwelt much on the hard work of the retreat. "What shall we be doing, then, dear Mother?" said an unsophisticated novice; "shall we be scrubbing floors?" "No, indeed," said the Mother; "something far harder." Many of them would need the silence and recollection to make them strong for the parting that awaited them. The night before she left them she stole back into the noviciate after night-prayers, and knelt long before Our Lady's altar, sobbing

as if her heart would break, and knelt there till she had prayed herself back to calmness. Her novices were all asleep, or at least long abed, before she had ended her supplications for them and herself and stolen to her cell. The next morning she was early at her place in the school, and from that hour her entire interest seemed engrossed by those the care of whom was now her portion.

This thoroughness of hers was very marked. A young nun who worked under her in the schools, and had been her novice, often went to her about the children's business, and longed for a word for herself, as she pathetically tells us. But Mother Xaveria was engrossed with her charges, and never thought of what her assistant might be desiring. She was intense in her performance of anything that came to her hand to do. As Mother Scholastica said to one who lamented the onerous duty of Mistress of Schools for Mother Xaveria, she being so delicate, "If I gave Mother Xaveria charge of the cabbage, she would put her whole soul into it." Mother Scholastica was too much in earnest to say "heart" in this case. This passionate sense of duty was apparent to every one. A priest who knew a good deal about the internal affairs of the house said he believed from the Angelus in the morning till the last Ave at night, no single detail of the children's lives escaped Mother Xaveria.

She kept a sufficiently high ideal before them, truth to tell. The Children of Mary were told that there was

no reason why they shouldn't be as good as novices. Mother Xaveria had a way of lifting up people to her own expectations. Perhaps it was because she never aimed less high than she said, and never doing anything second-best herself, it was her genuine expectation that those she could influence should be in step with her. The school-children fulfilled her expectations nobly as a whole. She believed in them, and they repaid her belief. A troublesome youngster said, "Mother Xaveria is *this* kind: if everyone else hated and were down on you, she'd find something good in you." She handled her Children of Mary much like her novices. At 6.30 in the May mornings she gathered them to their meditation. Each day there was a new virtue of the ideal woman, the Mother of God, to be reflected upon, and the spiritual work began in that dewy and golden time, with cool air blowing and the birds singing without. Early rising was always difficult to her, because of her great delicacy; but she rose early even when she was dying. She never thought for herself that because it was difficult it should be avoided, and her Children of Mary received the same measure.

For all that she looked so high, her eyes were very wide open for mundane things, as the school-children soon found out. As she walked up and down the refectory of an evening, it was soon apparent that not the lightest breach of manners or decorum escaped her. A bad habit in the children she met with that patience

which she had shown with a difficult subject in the noviciate, steadily keeping at the thing till she had accomplished what she desired. A defect of pronunciation was so laboured at, or an awkward trick of manner or gait. How lovely she was may be measured by the fact that so many years afterwards one who had been a child at school under her says that the happiest hours of her life were those given up to a quaint institution of Mother Xaveria's called "French recreation." Imagine one's happiest hours being spent at French recreation! Those were half-hours, properly speaking. Mother Xaveria might have originated a proverb, "Take care of the half-hours and the hours will take care of themselves." She made golden use of the odd half-hours. I suppose she had brought the secret of it from the noviciate, where time is measured by half-hours, and the girl-nuns have not time to get attached to one occupation before they move to another.

But at the half-hour of French recreation the children sat and sewed, while the Mother chatted in French or read a story in French, and then perhaps expected one to turn it into colloquial French, and all the time sent out a steady radiance from her beautiful eyes that lit the time to golden for the children. Yet the loiterer or the careless sewer need not hope to escape. Her child who records this tells how the bad workwomen were uneasily apprehensive of being brought to book at any moment. She was very sweet to them though. One of them says, "We knew she belonged to us after

God. Not one of our childish ups and downs but had real importance for her."

And again I find in the same notes, "She always took us to be better than we were, and we *could* not disappoint her. And her face used to light up so beautifully when she heard anything to the credit of one of us. If we *tried* to improve any way and failed, she always understood. I remember in the May mornings at the meditations, how after a while she seemed to be lost to earth. She sat immovable, with her eyes closed, her hands clasped, the words flowing from her lips. There were two or three sentences she loved, and urged on us constantly. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence" was one, and another, "That which thy hand findeth to do, do it well."

She was suffering constantly at this time with her spinal complaint, but one could never guess she was in pain. When the children brought their little affairs to her, she discussed them with such interest that one would think she had no care outside; nor had she for the moment. Nothing escaped her thoughts. At one time, when there was to be an investment of Children of Mary, Mother Xaveria took care to order that the silver medal for one child, whose people had met reverses of fortune and could not afford such a thing, should be large and solid, and chased like the other children's. None of her little ones ever suffered mortification that she could avert. No real mother could have averted pain more tenderly.

Even when she was very weak, she would accompany the children in their recreation-hour. An innovation of hers was making the recreation-time as gay and pleasant as it could well be. She introduced many new games, and had special gala-days, when prizes were distributed for proficiency: there were impromptu picnics and other delightful things, and she was always glad with them, and would not forego the delight of sharing their pleasure, even on one of her bad days. There was not a drop of the Calvinist in her. She believed in happiness, and the religion she taught had no gloom. She knew how to make our Lord's yoke indeed light and sweet.

When the children came to her with their aspirations for the future, she gave each sympathy, but discriminated widely, as in the difficult question of religious vocations. Two damsels came to her once with their desires to become nuns in the future. She listened to them with all sweetness, but after the one occasion let the matter drop, and never referred to it even in the remotest way; and to children, who have, as a rule, much spiritual egotism, this must have been trying. She had truly detected the leaven in the little ladies, for after vacation they came back decked out with many gauds and fripperies, and with a little worldly air which was no doubt imposing. Mother Xaveria let them flaunt for a bit, and then took them one evening in the still twilight to the crib, and talked to them very sweetly about our Lord in His lowliness, and how the

three kings brought Him their gifts; and then, when the hearts were softened, she suggested to them to put off their ribbons and things at our Lord's feet, which they did willingly, being good little souls. One did actually find a religious vocation afterwards, but dated its beginning to that evening by the crib.

Another narrative bears witness how different she could be in the case of a genuine call to religious life. This child of Mother Xaveria's had desired from the earliest time to become a nun, but had never told it to any one, feeling a great shyness over her secret. She says she always felt that when the friend came to whom she ought to reveal it, she would know at once. When she was a little girl of thirteen, chance brought her to Rathfarnham. She walked through the beautiful stately house, thinking to herself that she would not wish her place to be in such a one, but in a little convent, lowly and obscure. She says that even then a sudden voice said within her, "You will find the friend you seek here; you will find your friend here." However, Mother Xaveria did not reveal herself then. Some years passed, and a school-girl from Rathfarnham told this young girl of a newly-appointed Mistress of Schools, called Mother Xaveria. Again came the inward voice prompting, "She is your friend; go to her!" The feeling was so strong that, by hook or crook, the girl got herself transferred from her Dominican convent school to Rathfarnham. When once she had beheld Mother Xaveria, she never doubted. Quite soon

she told her how things were with her. Mother Xaveria saw at once that this was a case of a genuine call. She took the girl into her own thoughts and feelings about religion with the most ardent confidence. She used to take her away to her room, and talk to her about the religious life and the delight of living for God, in her intense way: things secret and sacred with her were revealed to this young girl, who was fired with such another flame. "But," said the girl on her first interview, "my vocation is not for Loretto." "You are wrong," said Mother Xaveria with equal conviction; "you will be a Loretto nun." And, as the girl says simply, she had neither wealth nor accomplishments to make her an acquisition to the Order. Notwithstanding, Mother Xaveria talked to her of all the Orders, placing each with its separate objects before her for sympathy. One of the practices she urged upon her was to try to lead a nun's life in her school-life, trying after the highest ideal of discipline and recollection. "And always hold yourself in readiness to obey God's will," she would say, "*even* if it should call you to Loretto." She would say this last with a smile.

The last evening of the retreat, the young girl tells, after Mother Xaveria had spoken to her as usual of her heart's desire, she said suddenly, "Let us kneel down and ask of God light to know His holy will, and grace to do it." The two knelt, praying long and earnestly, and during the prayer the girl felt it revealed to her that after all God had willed Loretto for her,

as Mother Xaveria had divined. Before the year was out she entered the noviciate.

Another of Mother Xaveria's qualities was her immense generosity. Being now in a position of authority, happy those who came to her for favours, for she was so glad to grant them. A sister who was Mistress of Schools in a branch house was visiting at Rathfarnham, and mentioned some need to Mother Xaveria. It was not very pressing, and yet was somewhat difficult to supply, and the sister was not surprised when it seemed to be tacitly let drop. But the evening before she left after a long visit, Mother Xaveria came to her with the desired grace in her hands. "Dear Mother, did you think of it all this time?" "Yes, indeed," said Mother Xaveria simply, "I often lay awake at night wondering how it could be done." She loved the Sisters in charge at the branch-houses to come begging to her for one thing or another, especially if the thing was for the children—feasts, or prizes, or such like; she almost beggared herself; but as her own children never suffered, we must suppose her store was like the widow's cruse of oil.

She made an admirable Mistress of Schools from a business point of view. Once fairly installed, she put in operation a most drastic system of reform. She was clear-sighted enough to see that, with the advance of education among women, the convent schools would be put on their mettle, and that the old-fashioned systems would no longer do. It is no doubt very much

her work that the Loretto nuns all through Ireland have shown extraordinary efficiency as teachers, and have kept well in line with the lay-schools and colleges in carrying off the honours of competitive and fiercely contested examinations. She adopted an entirely new system of teaching, bringing in lay-teachers for special subjects, having the nuns trained in such special subjects, instituting written and oral examinations of a very searching kind annually, dividing the year into three terms, and many other reforms. Also she improved the school belongings. She was responsible for the great airy dormitories. She went about her work of reformation thoroughly and well.

Like all reformers, she met plenty of vexatious opposition. Your nun is likely to be of all persons most conservative. Mother Xaveria was often tired and disheartened over her reforms. When most tried, she would slip into the choir for a few minutes, and there this life and its troubles would drop off her like a mantle. She would lose herself in prayer. This was her usual form of adoration and petition :—

" My King and my God, I come to renew my humble tribute of homage and adoration. It was by Thee I began the day ; by Thee let me continue it. Thou art the centre where I seek for rest and comfort, and I desire no repose but in Thee. I come for a new supply of strength and vigour, that I may finish the day in Thee, and repair whatever was of failure in the part gone by of it. Grant me the helps necessary for

this purpose. Be Thou Thyself in my heart to be my support, my strength, and my defence. Amen."

She was no rough-riding reformer. She was very anxious to hear suggestions from all, even the most inexperienced and the most inimical. But when she saw clearly a thing ought to be done, she went on with it. Her successor in office, who thanks God for having served under her for fourteen years, tells how exquisite was her maternal tenderness to the sick children. Almost her first waking thought was for any child who might be sick. If the report was unfavourable, she hurried off to the infirmary to see for herself. There was no end to the little dainties and comforts she procured, and many times in the day she came stealing to the bedside with her words of hope and cheer. Then at night she would appear in the infirmary, and kneel down near the sick child her heart yearned over, to read her Office and customary prayers. "I can't sleep," she would say to the Infirmarian, "for thinking of this poor little one, and I might as well say my prayers here as in my cell. Go you and get some of your work done, while I keep guard here."

The custom of saluting a nun when passing Mother Xaveria impressed on the children's minds by a pretty device. She told them that as a nun passed, her guardian angel went with her. "Remember to salute *him*," she said, "and ask his prayers for the nun he guards, and for yourself."

She was very tender to orphan children, or those whose parents lived at a distance. Such were called distinctively "Mother Xaveria's own children." If she had favourites, they were orphans or children who had unhappiness or poverty at home. She had the greatest horror of the children ever suffering mortification from being less well equipped than others. Once a little child, whose people were quite poor, was to appear in some pageant or other. She had no fitting clothes for it, and it was no use applying to her home. For once Mother Xaveria was immersed in fripperies. She planned and plotted in order that she might see quietly the things to be worn by the others, and so understand how to go about providing her *protégée*. In the end, the charming new outfit was ready, as fine as the finest, and Mother Xaveria packed it with innocent delight, and sent it off to the little one as a mysterious benefaction. One could not choose, when the finery was donned, whether mother or child was happiest.

Her sympathy with people in trouble was very tender, and she had a way of making it efficacious which few have. Once a Sister from a branch house was staying at Rathfarnham for Christmas, when she heard some very grievous tidings about her dear people in the world. She did her best to bear up under the trouble, and as there were theatricals that evening given by the children in the study-hall, she went, though sorely against the grain. She got into a very dark corner, and while all were happy and

merry, she sat, as she thought, unnoticed, the tears flowing fast in the shadow of her veil. Presently some one touched her, and then drew her very gently out to the cloister. It was Mother Xaveria. She won from her her secret trouble, and then comforted her as few could. "We will pray," she said, "pray hard, you and I, and you will *see* God will make things right." She said it with the assurance born of immense faith. The Sister at once felt lifted up and hopeful. And Mother Xaveria proved to be right. In a little while God removed the trouble, and left the way clear again.

After she had left them in the school, her influence did not wane. When the intermediate examinations came, Cardinal M'Cabe expressed a wish the convents should take the subjects up, and said especially to Mother Xaveria that he expected the Loretto pupils to come to the front, lest, as he said, people might begin to count convent education slow and unsatisfactory. She carried his words to the children, but I doubt if it was his words they remembered. "Mind," she said, "I *trust* you, for the honour of Loretto." The nuns in the schools said afterwards, that whenever the pupils flagged under the unaccustomed work, they had but to remind them of Mother Xaveria's trust in them. They did brilliantly, every girl who went up passing, many taking exhibitions, honours, and prizes. During all those years in the school, she was so devoted to the children that she had scarcely a minute of the long day for herself. She was jealous of them, as a

real mother might, coveting to be with them from the time their eyes opened till they closed at night. In the early morning, while they were yet asleep, she had a little breathing space. In the summer mornings she was up at five, and after prayers in the choir she would go out in the grounds while the dew was on everything, and the birds singing their fresh untired songs. She would stray up and down delightedly, reading her Office in the young day, and drinking in the deep beauty of the world. Then she would return, walking slowly, and looking in here and there. She liked to pause in the dairy and admire the great pans of cream, and smile her approval at the lay-sister, who was up so early working for God. Once when a young nun came to ask her advice about something, she said half playfully, "Run away to your Novice Mistress. I am only child's guide. I can tell you how the wheat grows and the wind blows."

In the refectory she coaxed the children to eat as any mother might, and if she saw they were really delicate, would go off to the kitchen for soup or something to tempt the weak appetite.

She was an extraordinarily efficient Mistress of Schools. One would have said she was gifted with a special talent in teaching and administering schools, if it were not that she was so admirable in whatever office she was placed in. When she had got a thing to do, she looked at every side of it, and then, in the name of God, did her best for it, with a thoroughness

that never tired or doubted. She left the schools on a high plane. She did not know what it was to spare expense for them, any more than thought. The schools have kept up her traditions and the name she left them. I can answer for it that her successor in her last and most responsible office has Mother Xaveria's almost pathetic eagerness to know the latest and best thing in education, and to secure it for the schools.

In 1880, Mother Scholastica Somers being very enfeebled, laid down the office of Superior-General, and Mother Xaveria was elected in her stead to rule over the Institute. The burden she thus accepted she, with another, Mother Concepcion Lopez, had really borne for some years, for Mother Scholastica had been long failing. And now, before I deal with the last act in Mother Xaveria's life, I must pause to commemorate the two valiant women whose names I have just mentioned.

CHAPTER XI.

MOTHER SCHOLASTICA SOMERS, SECOND SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE ORDER.

I HAVE spoken of Mother Xaveria's great capacity for friendship and sisterly love. Motherly love would be perhaps a better term for the feeling she had towards the young nuns who had been her novices, and whom, though scarcely younger than herself, she treated with a maternal sweetness. Of her more equal, in its sweetest sense, friends, were Mother Scholastica Somers and Mother Concepcion Lopez, these three being the pillars of the Institute, as Mother Teresa Ball was its corner-stone.

Mother Scholastica Somers was born in 1805, the daughter of Miles Somers, a country gentleman of Wexford. He lived at Ballywilliam, in the interior of the sea-board county, amidst the fertile Wexford plains, overlooked by mountains—Brandon with his conical peak, the White Mountains, Blackstairs, and Mount Leinster, each in its day a fastness for the rebels of '98. On the west are low hills with cultivation going over their summits, to the north is Tory Hill. For rivers, the Nore falls into the Barrow near New

Ross, which latter, a broad and gracious waterway, trails its placid length towards Waterford, where it meets the Suir, and away to the sea. Miles Somers had two little daughters, each of whom became Loretto nuns. He and his wife both died while these children, Margaret and Catherine, were young, but the home seems to have held together; there were brothers grown and growing up, and life was so happy there, that we are told Catherine, who was Mother Scholastica, was sorely drawn back to it after she had given it up for the convent.

Catherine Somers (Mother Scholastica) was not a young nun. She was thirty-five years of age when she entered Rathfarnham, whither her sister, five years her junior, had preceded her five years earlier. She does not seem to have had all the difficulty in adapting her matured habits and life to convent discipline which must be generally experienced in such cases, perhaps because she had a most sweet and pliable nature, which she had acquired by long warring against a somewhat hasty disposition. Still the yoke galled a little, though it was taken on with such eagerness and love. But she made so good a nun, that only four years after her entrance she was appointed local Superioress of the convent at North Great George's Street, Dublin.

At George's Street, her sister, Mother Benedicta, had preceded her as Superioress, and was now gone to take charge of a new convent at Gorey. Mother Bene-

dicta does not return to Mother Xaveria's life, and so I have little concern with her, but I must mention how she acted in a sphere admitting of more independent action than her sister's life of counsel and administration at home in stately Loretto Abbey. When Mother Benedicta went to Gorey, it was to a new convent with a beautiful church, designed by Pugin, and carried out royally by munificent donations. There were, and are, cloisters of great beauty, a convent and church classical according to the highest traditions of church and abbey building, beautiful to look at, but the convent, at least, sorely lacking comfort and convenience. "May God enlighten the architect!" said Mother Benedicta disrespectfully, viewing her great house with its difficulties of adaptability. In spite of all this grandeur, the spiritual house of God seems to have been in rather a bad way in Gorey. Protestant and Catholic were at open war. The Protestants were intolerant as only Irish Protestants are; the Catholics, full of memories of the Rebellion, not yet fifty years away—and your Celt has a long memory—gave hate for hate and scorn for scorn. In the little country town the creeds were sharply divided. Protestants dealt with Protestant tradesmen, Catholics with Catholic; friendship between a Protestant and Catholic was impossible, since if two had been found large-minded enough of themselves to overstep the barrier, each would have been banned by his co-religionists. Mother Benedicta was horrified at finding this state of things.

With a very unnunlike courage, she took the first step. The Catholics of Gorey held up their hands in horror at hearing that the Rev. Mother of the new community had placed some of her orders with Protestant traders. Remonstrances followed, but were quite unavailing. Then the little Catholic children thronging the schools were taught kindness and courtesy to the Protestants, whom they had hitherto harried as a duty. Again, the Rev. Mother instituted sewing-classes, and Protestant and Catholic girls were alike intrusted with the work. Before six months things were altered in Gorey. The Rector and his family were welcome visitors at the convent; kindness and friendship existed between the nuns and the Protestant gentry their neighbours; the people at large followed Mother Benedicta's lead, and gave up "hating each other for the love of God:" there was peace in the atmosphere that had been so troubled. No wonder that she was looked up to as a saint by all creeds and classes, and held in admiration as a brave woman, like St. Catharine of Siena, who did not choose that the children of this world should monopolise to themselves all the wisdom.

North Great George's Street Convent, where Mother Scholastica held her first superiorship, was the town mansion up to 1836 of the Protestant Archbishop of Cashel. The dark stately old street rises abruptly on the hill which overlooks Dublin from the north. Like Rutland Square, with which it is parallel, its

ground was occupied by orchards and gardens a century and a half ago, till Westmoreland Street was built, and the bridge connecting the Parliament Houses with the north side of the city; and the Rotunda, which was Dr. Mosse's adjunct to his hospital, became the fashionable assembly-house. Then the Irish noblemen and gentlemen went house-building, for it was the short reign of splendour that preceded the Union. There was one, a Mr. Commissioner Beresford, who was a sort of reigning emperor of the city, though strictly speaking his office was that of First Commissioner of the Revenue. However, he allotted the revenue so splendidly, that he might be said to have found Dublin of brick and left it of marble. He opened new streets, built bridges, erected great and splendid public buildings with truly royal prodigality. The Members of Parliament of both Houses filled his new streets with great mansions, adorned them within with fresco and wall-painting and wood-carving, hung them with gilt leather, brought special Italian artists to decorate them; in fine, poured out their money as freely as the First Commissioner did the revenue, and with a judgment and artistic feeling equal to his.

The streets of great houses are dark and silent enough now. There is none to my mind more cheerless than North Great George's Street, on whose every house-front seems written "Ichabod, that is, the glory is departed." Many lords and peers, spiritual

and temporal, lived here in old days. I suppose his Grace of Cashel was one of the latest to find that there was no further need for a Dublin town-house, since all that made Dublin "the Town" had been transferred to London.

When the nuns came into possession, the house was stripped and bare, all the great rooms giving back desolate echoes. A clock, which was the one article of furniture left, had grown tired of ticking, and gone asleep till human folk should begin again to take count of time. When Mother Teresa Ball had Mass said there on taking possession, there was not so much as a chair for the priest to sit on, or a table at which he might breakfast. She brought the Lord Himself to take possession very speedily. That first Mass was said in what has been ever since the convent chapel. It was the Archbishop's library, a beautiful gold and brown room, with a wide French window, deep set, and with the boughs of elms and beech and a bit of sky caught in it, so that one fancies one sees the country through that brown frame.

Later the nuns added to their possessions an old Methodist meeting-house next door, which serves excellently for a great school-room. There are boarders and day-scholars, and the nuns also keep some lady-boarders, who, being old or lonely or sickly, find the spiritual happiness and peace sweet. Here also the annual Ladies' Retreat was begun, which soon, however, grew so great that it had to be transferred to

Rathfarnham. This was Mother Teresa Ball's thought, though it excited all Mother Xaveria's solicitude. One need not be a Catholic or a devout person to recognise what a boon it is to women of the world to slip away for a ten days in the year, and, in the quiet of a nun's cell looking out on meadows and mountains, sit face to face with God and one's own soul. Even the physical and mental rest of such a retreat must be a great benefit.

Mother Scholastica seems to be remembered most by her great charity—not alone charity of deeds, though in almsgiving she was as prodigal as one is who looks upon herself as Christ's dispenser—but her extraordinary charity of thought and speech. Whatever report might be brought to her, she sifted and surveyed from all aspects, till, no matter how flagrant the conduct of the offender, she found room for sympathy and excuse. As an administrator she allowed no one to judge for her. Whether it was a Sister, one of the school children, a workman about the place, if any complaint was made, she took it into her own most merciful hands, and one might be sure that while no injustice was done, there would be the fullest mercy and charity. Her great meekness also grew with her years. As I have said, she began by being hot-tempered, but as a young girl, beholding an outburst of savage fury in a coarse and ignorant woman, she was so shocked that she cast down once for all her own temper under her feet. She succeeded so excellently in subduing it, that she became

remarkable for her placid sweetness and graciousness, and no one could believe that these were not especial gifts bestowed upon her by nature.

Mother Teresa Ball, now approaching the end of her pilgrimage, and worn out with many labours, leant on her heavily, and never felt her shrink or fail beneath the burden. When the foundress was stricken by her last illness, Mother Scholastica was hastily summoned from North Great George's Street. By the dying bed —the death was to be a lingering one—she virtually assumed the office which was to be conferred on her two years later. Mother Teresa Ball died in her arms, full of peace and confidence in the daughter whose hands were holding the threads of the affairs of her great Order. In 1862, at a General Chapter, over which Cardinal Cullen presided, Mother Scholastica was formally declared Superior-General of the Loretto Order in Ireland. She governed for so long as eighteen years, and was then mercifully delivered from her high office because she was too feeble longer to spend herself in its duties.

I find few enough traces of her. Those nuns do not flaunt their virtues even in the most intimate atmosphere, which is so much the worse for a biographer. One little story I think gives a hint of the delicate sweetness and fine breeding which, even in her old age, made her so attractive to people coming in from the outside world. One of the young nuns had an elder sister, who, dating from some grievance against

a nun, had given herself up to detesting all priests and nuns, and in the end had rejected Faith and God Himself. This poor girl's cup of wrong was filled to overflowing when her beloved "little sister" was, as she considered it, entrapped into giving herself up for life to the yoke of Christ. The mother of the two girls was a most excellent Catholic, and she and her young nun fretted greatly over the aberrations of the elder girl. Mother Scholastica was their confidant, and recommended all the time prayer and patience, and example and love, which were freely given, for the three were deeply attached to each other. The sisters did not meet for some years because of the elder's grief and resentment, but at last, nearing the time of the young sister's reception, the mother and daughter were going abroad, and the latter was induced to visit her sister at Rathfarnham before leaving. Passionately happy and pleased as the two were at the meeting, the elder girl never for a moment forgot her inimical attitude towards the nuns, and especially towards Mother Scholastica, as being the Superior. This went on through half-a-dozen visits. Then one day, as Mother Scholastica was turning away to leave mother and daughters together, she dropped her hood and the young nun ran and lifted it, and arranged it on her head, whispering as she did so a troubled little apology for her sister. The Rev. Mother put her arms round her in her most motherly way, and whispered, "Never mind, dear child; we must pray and all will be well,"

and the smile which accompanied the whisper took in all three. "She had a dear smile," says the nun who tells the story, and it worked its way into the stubborn heart. When they were driving away after the visit, the girl said suddenly, "Mother dear, if there is another woman alive as good and true as you are, I believe it's that sweet old nun." She came again and again, and grew every time more devoted to Mother Scholastica, and happily, through this unexpected love and belief, came back to her faith and its practices.

Another story which shows her quickness in judging people, as well as her power of impressing them, tells how Rathfarnham, in the troubled days of the '67, had one morning an unexpected visit from an American gentleman travelling with his two nieces, who were going to school in a French convent. The children had somehow visited Rathfarnham the preceding day, and fallen violently in love with the house and its Superior. The visitor came very early, while the nuns were at Mass, and long before the world begins to think of its breakfast. He said somewhat shyly that he must leave Dublin at once, and that his nieces had implored him to ask Mother Scholastica to receive them instead of their going on to the Sacré Cœur; that he felt how unreasonable the request was, but that they had forced him to accede to it. He was plainly one of the "suspect" Americans, whom Government would harass, or worse, so long as they remained in the troubled country. However, while he waited his answer, very unhopeful

about it, Mother Scholastica turned on him "her dear smile;" she was not at all in doubt. "Bring me the children," she said; and sure enough they were installed in their new home before noon, and welcomed with the most tender cordiality, as one of them tells, by the Mother Superior. They were always great pets of hers afterwards, and if they saw her walking in the grounds, would fly to her, sure of their welcome. They were very good and sweet girls, and amply justified Mother Scholastica's confidence in them and their guardian. The younger one entered Rathfarnham, and remained the especially dear child of the Superior, and was with her even at her dying hour.

The nun who gives me these notes—perhaps she is the younger of the two Americans—sums up her beloved Mother's special virtue as sympathy. "One always felt that one's trouble was hers, and she gave counsel and comfort in so motherly and simple a way, that one's heart was lifted up and strengthened. Her tenderness was for all; but once she took you for a friend, it was for ever; and loving you, she cared for all belonging to you."

She died in 1885, full of years and honours. She was always as meek and lowly as the youngest lay-sister, while she carried well the dignity of a high position. You may see the cross that marks her gentle body's resting-place in that restful little cemetery, amid the songs of birds, with the berberis like a burning bush, and the purple flowers of mourning over

wall and gate-arch. They don't shut away this little city of the blessed dead. One pushes away to enter no stonier barrier than a veil of clematis. And there is always a nun there saying her beads, so that the dead are not lonely or forgotten.

CHAPTER XII.

MOTHER CONCEPCION LOPEZ.

Concepcion Lopez, a daughter of Spain, was in the latter days of Mother Scholastica's Superiorship as much her staff to lean upon as *she* had been Mother Teresa Ball's. Concepcion Maria Magdalene Lopez, to give her her sounding baptismal name, was a daughter of Don Miguel Lopez of Cadiz, and Elena Roberts, a Spanish lady with an English ancestry. Perhaps the English blood made Concha beautiful in a way rare beneath Southern skies. She must have dazzled the Andalusians with her creamy skin and red-gold hair. She had the most wonderful colouring to set into her nun's veil. How she came to Loretto was in this wise. Her mother had been sent across seas to school, as Concha herself was later, to Micklegate-Bar Convent. Frances Ball and the Spanish-English girl became dear friends in the old convent, where the light of faith has never been blown out since the days of Frances Bedingfield and the Titus Oates persecutions. To school at Micklegate-Bar went Concha in her turn, a quaint little apparition in her black Spanish frock, with all that glory of

red-gold hair. We hear that she was very grave, joining the other children at their play under protest, and even when joining, preserving her quaint little air of seriousness.

She had been reared by a wise and holy mother. When a little child she was very frail in health, and her mother kept her clothed in white, and dedicated her to the Mother of God. By degrees she grew much more robust. She was a passionate little child, full of Southern vehemence, and she remembered when she was old that an outbreak of temper was met not with punishment, but by her mother leading her to the Blessed Virgin's altar, and making her say, "Dearest Mother, pray for thy naughty little child." She only retained of the temper little sparks of impetuosity and impatience, which never quite deserted her. She was a very impressionable child, and grieved sorely for leaving her mother and father. But even in the home-sickness and loneliness she was open to other impressions. A discourse on the love of God moved her to floods of tears, which the kind nun who carried her off in her motherly arms thought were attributable to home-sickness, till she found out that the words repeated between the sobs were "God is so good." It was a temperament not likely to be found failing in generosity. She always wanted to be a nun, from those early days even: as she told a confidant among the nuns, "I want to go away quietly some place where I can work for God."

After the Bar Convent she went for a time to the Sacré Cœur nuns in Paris. There is no record of her time there, but it was very happy. A little while before she died she said, "Ah! I have always loved the Sacred Heart," referring not, as some thought, to our Lord, and she needed not to make any declaration of her love for Him, but to the nuns and the Order she had known in her school-days.

At Paris she had a serious illness, and was taken home. Nine years she lived with her people, passionately happy, growing strong in the golden air and full sunshine, thriving heart and soul in the love and peace of her home. She was so happy that it almost broke her heart to leave it all, though the Voice was at her heart as of the Bridegroom in the Canticles. She obeyed with exquisite pain. Her father could not bear the parting, and fled away into France till all was over. We are told how the night before she left home for ever, she stole in and kissed her sleeping brothers and sisters with an agony of tenderness. As she embarked on the ship which was to bear her away for all time, she said long afterwards that her desolation was so utter, she felt God could ask no further sacrifice of her. She never saw Spain again, though Loretto sent out foundations there, and one even to her own Cadiz. She never asked to return. Perhaps the parting had been so bitter as to seal home and country for her, so that no return was possible. On her death-bed she dreamt of Spain.

"Oh!" she said to a Sister, "till you go to heaven you will never know how beautiful Spain is!"

She had offered herself as a postulant to Mother Frances Ball, her mother's old friend. Her first experience of Dublin was a disheartening one enough. She had been consigned to a kind Protestant friend, who mistook *South* for *North* Great George's Street, and directed the cabman to drive to the former. It was a narrow and unlovely street, made up, with one or two exceptions, of sordid little shops, and the sky so high overhead letting only a blue chink through. Concepcion clung to her new friend's hand frightened and depressed, while the friend wept floods of tears at the uninviting locality in which this gold and white flower of Andalusia was to be immured. However, they soon rejoiced over their mistake, and were driven away to North Great George's Street, where the Mother Superior was waiting to take her tired little daughter into her loving arms. Concepcion knew George's Street Convent before she made acquaintance with the Mother House, or Bray, Dalkey, or the other houses where she was to dwell, all so much more beautiful than this gloomy great house of the past. However, she was quite happy, being once installed, and in the end, "by accident," as folks say, she came back here to die.

She must have rejoiced when she was taken out to Rathfarnham in the golden September afternoon, when the stubble fields were yellow and the hills

misty grey, and the roses on the trellis between the gardens and the clover-field were out in a second crop of yellow and pink, and wine-colour, and creamy great blossoms. As she was conducted to her little cell high up along the bright corridor, the nun who was her guide heard her saying softly to herself, "For God I will live, for God I will die." A month or two later she received the habit and white veil; it was the 12th of November 1839.

After her profession she was Infirmarian for a time, a post for which she was peculiarly fitted. No King Log was she in her domain. Her sympathy and warm heart made her the tenderest of nurses, and her soft hands were curiously efficient. Like Mother Xaveria at Lough Cooter, she invaded the duties of the lay-sisters, and when the school children were sick, hung about them as a mother might, performing duties repugnant enough to human nature, but beautiful to them who behold in the suffering the living members of Christ.

Afterwards she was Mistress of Schools, and in due time became Superior of Dalkey Convent, a great house of granite by the sea, architecturally beautiful, and from its prominence like one of those abbeys of old, which, perched high on a rocky coast, reminded them who go down to the sea in ships to praise the Lord. The rocks swarm up to the walls of the convent almost, and one looks away to Howth, deep purple, out in the bay, and beyond it the wide sea.

In winter the waves swarm in over the rocks, and the beaten gulls come crying like drenched kittens about the windows of this fortress of God.

At Dalkey, Mother Concepcion, who had been Mother Gertrude, returned to her birth-name, since there was already a Mother Gertrude there, and the duplication of names was likely to cause confusion. She would not, however, forget her patron, who being fervent beyond what we dream in our northern latitudes, was the fitting mother of so burning a soul as Concepcion Lopez. Dalkey, which Mother Teresa Ball loved too—she would sit on the rocks silent for a long time looking over the glory of sea and sky—laid its fascinations on its new Superior. She found it hard to leave it for Baymount, Clontarf, though she said, "All is the same to me, provided it be the will of God. You may send me to the North Pole if you like, only I daresay I should die of cold." She had very little of the languor one associates with her Southern temperament, but was, on the contrary, brisk and busy in no ordinary degree.

Being so energetic, she moved about a good deal. After Baymount she governed the beautiful convent at Bray for a time, during which she spread the work of the nuns among the poor people a great deal. Then she returned to Rathfarnham as Mistress of Novices; again she was off to Lough Cooter to wind up its affairs and recall the foundation; after that she went to Letterkenny as Superior of the new

convent. There was no rest for her, and she was a veritable rolling-stone, having little of the life of little nooks and little books which Thomas à Kempis praised. However, she carried her convent in her heart, and would not have deserved the home-loving recluse's condemnations of those who travel. After Letterkenny she was temporary Superior at Dalkey, and Superior once more at Bray, where she and her flock commemorated with great joy the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The angels were dear friends of Mother Concepcion, and she peopled her world with them very fully. As befitted so great a traveller, she specially trusted to the Angel Raphael, who went with her in her adventurous journeys from Rathfarnham to Bray, and from Dalkey to Letterkenny. Gabriel prepared her for her prayers. Her own angel she said good-bye to every night in choir, and while she slept, left him to keep watch before the Blessed Sacrament for her.

Her greatest journey was to Rome, whither she was sent in 1858 with another nun upon the business of the Institute. She set out with a weight of foreboding on her, which pressed her heavily on her way across the Continent. It was warranted, for at Rome she heard of the death of her father and mother, whom she had never seen for all those years, but whom she had continued to love intensely. She said afterwards that the bitterest hours of her life were those spent kneeling before the altar of the Gesu, while the waters

of desolation went over her head. She was helped greatly in this suffering by the friendship of a Spanish Jesuit, whom God sent to her opportunely. It was part of her thoroughness that this blow did not prostrate her till her usefulness was over. The Spanish ambassador, backed by a letter from the Queen of Spain, obtained almost at once for them an interview with Pope Pius IX., who put back for his two Irish daughters a Borghese princess. They drove in great state to the Vatican in the ambassador's carriage; they were received by Cardinal Antonelli, and conducted through the stately palace, and past the rows of Swiss guards, to the Pope's presence. He lifted them up when they bent to kiss his sandal, and treated them with the most delicate graciousness. They obtained all they wished, and were able to return home in a very short time. They had a bad passage, and as soon as they got home Mother Concepcion fell sick, having borne too long the heart-sickness, and lay ill for a good while.

Afterwards she returned to Bray, which she fondly loved. During those last years of her last residence there, she built and beautified with a large-handedness and judgment worthy of Mother Teresa Ball herself. When her beautiful little convent church was dedicated, one of the priests said to her, "Now, Mother Concepcion, you may sing your Nunc Dimittis!" "Yes," she said, "and thank God! much as I love Bray, I am ready to leave it this minute, if obedience

calls." For the other Nunc Dimittis she knew was not yet, she being so full of energy and capacity for God's work.

Nine months later she was called back to Rathfarnham to receive the Superiorship of the Stephen's Green Convent. She felt leaving Bray so acutely, despite her cheerful obedience, that, as she confided to a Sister, she offered the bitterness of the sacrifice as a preparation for her death. "May the heart of Jesus sweeten for you every bitterness!" she said as farewell to the Sisters who thronged round her, feeling desolate at her going.

I must not dwell longer on her many offices and responsibilities. She held every office it was in the power of the nuns to bestow, and in every one earned love and honour and increased odour of sanctity. Her convent at Stephen's Green I must tell about later. I like one little story of her time there, that she used to love to welcome the invalids of the various convents, who were sent there in numbers, I suppose to be within easy reach of the doctors, and because the great house is so airy and spacious. She said proudly, "This is the Mater Misericordiæ of Loretto," her face lighting up as she said it.

"God alone," was a motto she loved. Another of her teachings to her novices when she was Novice Mistress was, "Let us be peaceful: the peace of God passeth all understanding." The patience of God was also a thing she loved to dwell upon.

In 1874 she took the position of assistant to Mother Scholastica. She had an immense deal to do in this arduous post. Many things devolved on her beside the duty of holding the annual visitation in all the branch houses. After each visitation her parting words were always on charity, and the love that is beautiful between Sisters. "God is found in peace and silence," she would say; or, "Those who cannot endure cannot love;" or again, "In sacrifice we find our truest joy."

During those years of heavy duty, the great friendship between her and my Mother Xaveria, to which I have not made allusion before, grew and strengthened. One of Mother Xaveria's latest acts in life was to read and correct the MS. book which contains a sketch of Concepcion Lopez and her life, and from which I make these extracts.

After four years of her Superiorship in proxy, she had an intermittent fever which left her very delicate. In the spring of that year, 1878, she suffered another great sorrow in the death of her sister, which occurred suddenly. "I shall be the next to go," she said with sorrowful insight. However, the year waxed and waned till December was more than half-way through. On the 19th of December, the Octave of the Immaculate Conception, her own feast, she and Mother Xaveria were bound on a momentous errand. At 2.30 they were to meet Cardinal M'Cabe at George's Street, to consult with him about the approaching

election of Superior-General, Mother Scholastica being near the end of her eighteen years' holding of the office, and by reason of infirmity praying deliverance from its responsibilities.

Mother Concepcion looked pale and anxious that day. One may well believe that she dreaded the receiving of an office of immense responsibility. She had not slept the night before, and when the Infirmarian urged her to rest in bed for an hour or two, she only answered, "We shall have a long rest in eternity." She said over and over again, as if to nerve herself, during that morning, "I am going to do God's will." It was noticed that she turned back again and again to the church, as if she could not drag herself away from the foot of the altar. As she turned to leave the house at last with Mother Xaveria, she paused again to ask the nuns to pray for her in the Christmas Novena which began that day.

She came back to her beautiful home next morning in her coffin. Immediately after that trying interview with the Cardinal, she had had a stroke of apoplexy, and paralysis supervening, she died in a few hours.

So the tireless hands and feet at last were at rest. It was what she would have prayed for, to die within the Octave of her feast, and within the house dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, and in the time when heaven and earth were preparing for the Feast of

the Child. Concepcion Lopez was a valiant woman, who had chosen exile for Christ's sake, and who had with rare efficiency served many in His Name, and raised up imperishable monuments to His glory of the stone that endures for time, and the precious human fabric that shall not wear out through eternity!

CHAPTER XIII.

MOTHER XAVERIA AS CHIEF SUPERIOR.

MOTHER XAVERIA took up her great office scarcely able for its weight. As Mistress of Schools, she had pretty well exhausted herself, and the old delicacy had increased so much that she began to feel her time on earth was not to be long. She said so, very gently, to a loving novice of hers, who came to her in high pleasure that her beloved Novice Mistress was now to be her Superior. "Don't be so glad," said Mother Xaveria; "I shall not be very long with you. I have only to level some hills and make the way smoother for another. My work will be soon done."

She began her new office in no valetudinarian spirit, but rather as one who realises vividly that "the night cometh wherein no man shall work." She set out almost immediately on a visitation of her convents, a painful thing to essay, for she could not well bear railway travelling. If the joy of her spiritual daughters in receiving her could heal her hurts, she would have suffered none. Her visit to each house was a jubilee. When she had visited, with Mother

Concepcion Lopez, for the aged Superior, she had been the open-handed friend of the branch houses. Nothing gave her such delight as when she could write, "The Rev. Mother authorises your new church; you can begin at once," or assented to some lesser thing. Now, as the responsible person, she was not likely to be less wisely generous. On the visitations, the old way she had of remembering names and faces and characters and needs served her in good stead. She had the different advice for each one, and never forgot from one visitation to another confidences made to her. She remembered even the school-children one by one. If she had admonitions at leaving, she had also praise, and her praise was sweet in the mouth.

The friends she made on her visitations were not confined to the convent inmates. She contrived in every place to get to know a good number of the poor folk. She always came well provided with rosaries and crucifixes, and she distributed them among her poor friends. Sometimes, too, she gave substantial help when she saw it was likely to be of service. The poor people used to hurry to the convents as soon as they heard of her arrival. "We heard the kind Mother, the head of ye all, was come," they would say.

Despite her weakness and pain after each railway journey, she was down next morning for meditation, and the Sister in charge could not induce her to take a rest. Yet she never found the early rising come

easy. To the last day of her life it was difficult and distasteful to the bodily part of her.

Her first visit on arriving at a convent was to any one who might be ill, whether nun or pupil. If the illness was serious, she was greatly distressed. Once passing through, and intending to stay only a night at a convent, she found a child very ill, and at once made up her mind to remain some time. As the nun who tells the story says, no real mother's love could surpass Mother Xaveria's, as she hung above the little one she had never seen before. Her heart went out to her all the more because she was an orphan, with no one to care whether she lived or died except the nuns, and a very old priest in a remote part of Ireland. For the little while she lingered, Mother Xaveria was constantly about her, filled with the most tender compassion and pain for her. When she died, as there was no one specially concerned about her, Mother Xaveria laid her to rest in the little convent cemetery, and a holier God's Acre none need desire to rest in.

On those visitations of hers she was more than ever all things to all men, and the lowliest lay-sister or the dullest of the school-children was considered by her equally with the Rev. Mother, or the pupil who was winning laurels for the convent. She used "her loveliness," as an American would say, her charm of look and manner and nature, to make every one happier and better; for, to be attracted by Mother Xaveria was to find oneself caught by the hand and

led on to God. Despite all her responsibilities and her little ease of body, she never seemed clouded or depressed. As she sat among her nuns, with her beautiful eyes shining, and her transparent face showing the play of thought as over a summer field the sunshine and shadows suceeed each other, she was indeed an embodiment of the beauty of holiness.

She followed with the most tender compassion and sympathy those to whom she gave the responsibility of government; yet she took care that each nun in the house had justice from her Superior. One says that she gave a command as one asking a favour.

A matter which cost her much care and labour was the drawing up of constitutions for the government of the houses in India, Australia, and America, the getting them accepted by all, and finally approved by Rome. The labour it cost her, the enormous correspondence, cannot be estimated. She took her responsibilities heavily herself, though she never let them weigh on others, and the details of the constitutions cost her many sighs, many an aching head, many a sleepless night. However, they were finally approved, and the foreign foundations found themselves, to their intense satisfaction, in intimate touch with Rathfarnham. A little later she sent out Mother Aloysia Sweetman to act as Superior of the Indian houses, Mother Delphina Hart and Mother Joseph Hogan, who had been in charge since 1841, desiring rest and time for preparation to die, though one would have imagined all

their lives a preparation. This was in 1882. The Indian Mission she specially loved, because it was in India St. Francis Xavier had worked. Every week she wrote to one, or sometimes more, of the houses there, and towards the end her daughters at home grew to dread the Indian mail-day, because she was so exhausted after the fulfilment of a duty she loved too well to delegate to any other. Every question in a letter from India should be carefully and fully answered, every commission exactly carried out. When she was on her death-bed she asked, "Did any one write to India this week?" and in days of illness the little commissions for those far-away daughters of hers, the purchases and such, had to be brought to her bedside that she might know they were satisfactory. She took every opportunity too to send them little presents.

Ballarat, the mother-house in Australia, was flourishing. I will deal with it in another place, and only mention it here to say, that when Dr. O'Connor, the Bishop of Ballarat, was asking for nuns, he had coveted Mother Xaveria above all others, but her Superiors would not give her up.

The Spanish Mission interested her only less than the Indian. Gibraltar convent had special trials and difficulties, and there were times when all her thoughts seemed to go away to the Rock. During her Superiorship, she added a third to the two convents already existing in Spain; this was the house at Puerto de Santa Maria, a name of good omen. She then

appointed for the Spanish houses a Provincial Superior, such as already existed in India and Australia, one who should have all the responsibility, subject to the mother-house at Rathfarnham. In filling this office, she sent away one of her dearest friends, one whom she should miss every day, and whom she knew full well she should never see again on this earth.

During her term of office she gave altogether to the foreign houses forty-eight of her best nuns. She grieved so much when each batch left her, that the partings perceptibly shortened her life. But she would not put off God with second-best. She took a mournful pleasure in sending away those dear children well provided; and once gone, her concern was that there should be a letter waiting them at every port of call. The last to leave her—it was a few months before her death—found a telegram waiting her in Australia with the word, "Welcome." Mother Xaveria had sent it to forestall her coming.

With all her weakness, she would have been scarcely able for so many labours if she had not known where to turn to for help. One of her young nuns said to her when she wanted something, "Ask our Lord, Mother darling: He is sure to give it to you, for you have never refused Him anything." She never knocked at a closed door. In doubt how to decide a very difficult and responsible question, she would hold the letter requiring her ultimatum against her heart after receiv-

ing Holy Communion, and so gather light as to how to answer.

When she gave any responsible office to her nuns, she used to announce it to them in some such way as, "You are going to be my staff. You will let me lean on you;" and once when unwillingness was manifested she said very softly, "You are to be my staff, *not* my cross."

She kept her old dislike of a censorious spirit. To some one who complained that young nuns were difficult to place in the path of perfection, she said, "The strongest trees have slowest growth: the greatest souls often come to God slowly." To another, who thought, as folk think in every generation, that the children are not what they used to be, she said, "They will be as we make them. Dear child, we are fast becoming of the past, but by example we can make what we will of those for whom the future is."

She showed, when almost on her death-bed, her possession of the *suaviter in re* by tackling a bishop —a difficult thing to her with her exquisite sense of reverence to Superiors. It was the Bishop of Ballarat, come to tell her about her daughters. He was enchanted with her, as every visitor was. When she had made him quite happy, she said to him in her soft way, that he had been so good and careful of her children. "Too careful, your Lordship," she went on, "for you will not let them out of your sight, and I think it would be for the glory of God that some of

them were setting up a convent in Melbourne. If you would but trust the Mother Provincial, your Lordship," she said, "I think she understands her community, and would know best how to dispose of her nuns." She impressed the Bishop so much, that on the spot he not only gave leave for the exodus to Melbourne, which he had strenuously opposed, but offered all he could do in the way of help. Two months later Mother Xaveria was in her grave, but the little colony at Melbourne flourished amazingly, and was strikingly successful in less than a year.

For all her labours, she was avid of more. "Ah!" she said to a Superior she had created, "I used to think I should do wonders for God. It is only now I realise how little I have done, and how little I can do."

In those later years she sent out a little foundation to teach day-scholars in the fashionable suburb of Rathmines. She had a great desire to secure a beautiful place, Charleville House, the residence of the late Lady Gray, for her convent, but matters somehow hung fire; so she took a house in Kenilworth Square for her school, and so successful was it that in a few months she had to take the house next door. She stocked the little convent from Rathfarnham, and the lay-sisters there for long enough made Kenilworth the scapegoat when any article was missing. A few months after Mother Xaveria's death, Charleville House fell into the nuns' hands quite easily—not the only

favour her affectionate children believe was procured for them by their Mother in heaven.

Some one said she had a passion for giving. She once said herself that the only deprivation involved in the vow of poverty was that one had not presents to give. However, she found presents sometimes. In her long weakness kind friends brought her things for comfort or alleviation. She was scarcely their possessor before she began to think of who would like them. She never had a superfluity. When she was dying, she sent for a sister, and drawing out a book from under the coverlet, with a kind of secret delight, she said, closing the nun's hand upon it, "There, take this, dear child. I was delighted to get it, for it is just what you would like. Run away with it now, and don't let any one see it."

Not long before her death she said, "God has been very good to me this year. I have never had so much money before to give away to people in distress. May God reward those who gave it to me." She was always helping people in her quiet and silent way. In those last sad days a pressing letter came one morning asking for some money. Mother Xaveria told one of the nuns to send it at once, as the need was urgent. It was one of the Mother's bad days, and the Sister, whose heart was wrung at the sight of her suffering, forgot the letter till after post-hours. The next time she appeared in the sick-room Mother Xaveria asked eagerly if the letter was gone. "No, dear Mother," said the culprit,

"I forgot; but it shall go the first thing in the morning." The dying face, clouded over with disappointment. "It would have been kinder to have remembered," she said in a low voice.

She was only ungenerous with herself. Her daughters say she was the very ideal of a lover of holy poverty. "The poor have not even flowers to give," she said to herself when she walked with her mother in the garden, and longed to give her flowers, but refrained. Long afterwards she said the incident had cost her much. She would not write often to her beloved younger sister in Australia because of the cost of postage, she was so jealous a treasurer of the common fund. The same fine and delicate pride was in her refusing to use for their specified purposes a magnificent carved fan sent home by the Indian nuns, with a wish that it should be given to her niece, and a rug of valuable skins which the Australian houses wished to be given to her brother. After permission asked and given, both went for charitable purposes. At the end of the annual retreat she undertook, with the fervour of a young novice, to strip herself of superfluities, but where the superfluities were to be found passed the comprehension of the other nuns.

The service she was so ready to give she would not accept, though she was often scarcely able to move from headache or other ills. "The poor have no servants," she would say, arranging her room so tidily that the lay-sister following her could find no speck

or disarrangement in it. She would have no concessions to her state of health any more than to her rank as Superior. Her cell was the lowliest place.

She remained in the little room which had been hers as Mistress of Schools during the five years Mother Scholastica Somers lived. Her bed took up the major portion of it, and the marvel was where she could find room to transact all her business. But she could not be persuaded to have a better appointed place. She worked incessantly, finding in duty well done the pleasure she denied herself in rest which would have been luxurious to her weakness. She could not be persuaded to rest. One might induce her to lie down, but her busy brain went on working all the same, and when she rose up again, some problem would have been puzzled out, some scheme prepared. Once when ordered complete rest at Dalkey after a bad illness, she took a little child to prepare for first communion, and gave herself to the preparation heart and soul. "The poor," she would say, "must work. Our Master was poor and labouring from His youth upwards."

In all her business she was still at every one's beck and call. The Portress, who held that office for thirty years, and brought Mother Xaveria many thousands of messages, bore witness that she never saw her impatient or disturbed. She answered her immense correspondence with great regularity. In the busiest hour she was always having to lay down her pen

and go to a visitor or listen to a difficulty, "Take a certain time every day for letter-writing, dear Mother," pleaded her daughters, "when no one shall disturb you." But she would not. She loved to be called upon and to answer.

The poor were never turned away from her gates. The nun who had charge of the gate-lodge testifies that none ever went away unrelieved with money, food, or clothing. She had her orders to write on a piece of paper for Mother Xaveria and send up to her at once all necessities. In a hard winter there was a permanent sack of oatmeal at the lodge for distribution, with bread, dripping, and great billets of firewood.

It was part of her love for the poor that she seemed to single out the lay-sisters for special favour. In the noviciate she had always, without any singularity, attended to them before the choir-nuns. Now, she loved to pay them flying visits in the laundry or the dairy, and brighten a whole day for them with her praise. The family troubles of a lay-sister would occupy her while a *queue* of her official nuns waited in the corridor; and her comfort was of the most practical kind, for she would set all her wires going till the trouble, where it was of a monetary kind, was relieved. She said in her last exhortation, that she envied the lay-sisters their lowly lives of work and prayer. When she was ill in the infirmary, the lay-sister who attended on her noticed that she seemed to look for occasions to obey her, doing all she ordered

with a humble and bright submissiveness, and asking for nothing. Another tells how, when she first saw Mother Xaveria coming in to the kitchen where she, a young postulant, was washing up cups and saucers, she thought the mother had the face of an angel. From that moment she had another child absolutely devoted to her. When the young novice received the veil, Mother Xaveria was too ill to be present, but sent for her afterwards, and had a long loving talk with her. "I had charge of her cell for a time," says this young nun, "and in trouble or distress, one look at her beautiful face seemed to comfort me more than I can say."

"The poor must rise early and work hard," was a constant saying of this lover of Our Lady of Poverty. I have dwelt on her early rising, and her difficulty in doing it, in another place. Because she found it hard, she was very compassionate to others, remembering perhaps how, when she was a novice, she used to fall asleep standing. In authority herself, she allotted a longer sleep where it seemed to her it was needed, and before the authority was hers, she would plead the cause of a sleepy sister eloquently, to procure her a longer rest.

She loved having all things in common. When she was Mistress of Schools, she dined at 12.30, so as to be ready to preside at the children's dinner. Once, when the Refectorian sent something to her which was not to be at the community dinner, she took fright at

once lest she was being treated daintily, and begged that she should never again have anything set before her that was not for the common table. At the same period she would hurry to the nuns' choir from her stall in the children's part of the church, at hours the children were not there. "God," she would say, "blesses us most richly when we are in common. Who knows what graces one might miss by being absent from community duties?"

Her last visit to Stephen's Green Convent was made on a cold February day, and the nuns were very anxious to get her back to Rathfarnham before the night and without exposure. After they had packed her comfortably in the cab to go home, she remembered she had not said good-bye to the lay-sisters, and, as if she foresaw the end, insisted on getting out to say her last words to them. The Sisters remember something more than usually tender in that parting. Her last words for Stephen's Green were, when the Rev. Mother handed her some silver to pay for the cab, with a playful, "I wish it were gold, dear Mother,"—"My dear," she said sweetly, "In this house there is the gold of charity."

Speaking of Stephen's Green reminds me of the Children of Mary's Sodality which meets there, and which Mother Xaveria was deeply concerned for, so that she, with Mother Concepcion Lopez, never missed being present at a monthly meeting. I attended a meeting there myself, to learn something of its prac-

tical working. It was on a mild, golden morning of last February, when we had miraculous weather. Stephen's Green Convent is one of the houses of the Irish nobility, deserted in the hegira after the Union. Within is the stately entrance-hall, with doors of beautiful dark mahogany, and lavishly decorated walls and ceilings. The nuns' chapel was my lady's drawing-room, a long magnificent room, divided midway by pillars and arches. The windows open inward, and are set with little lozenges of stained glass. They were all open that spring-like morning, when the songs of birds and the smell of green things a-blowing and a-growing came in on every breath. The room was full of maids and matrons, nearly all elegant and well-dressed, some more than that, for a meeting in mid-February embraces a good many ladies of fashion in town for the season and the Castle balls. I liked to think of those pretty girls dancing half the night, and then rising up in the morning to attend to God's business.

There was first an exhortation from the Director, an admirably simple and luminous discourse on the hindrances to the spiritual life. Afterwards there was benediction, and while the priest was vesting, a beautiful soprano voice began to the strains of the organ an old Latin hymn, in which the refined and educated voices joined, making delicious harmony.

Afterwards there was the business part of the day's doings. We went down to a great parlour, the medal-

lions on the wall of which were covered with photographs because they represented more or less undraped dancing nymphs, and the Director sat at the end of a long table and read aloud the records of the month's work. So many attended choir practice, so many visited hospitals, so many visited the sick and poor; then there were piles of clothes, baby clothes, flannel shirts, woollen jackets, petticoats, &c., made during the month. One realised what an immense agency for good exists here. The Children of Mary was once a society for young Jesuit novices. There was a fitness in its being appropriated by the sex to whom the corporal works of mercy ought to come by instinct rather than by acquirement. Every month it is extending its scope and its numbers.

The Children of Mary's Society and the Ladies' Retreat feed each other. The latter has taken place every July since 1866 at Rathfarnham. I have described the little nests where the ladies find themselves in the high corridor called *Rue Celeste*. It is a lovely institution, and a fashionable doctor might well prescribe it for a patient worn out with the demands of the family or the world, less holy, but often as clamorous. To come here for ten days, with the earth in its summer beauty, the hills and the sky filling in the bits of window in the sloping sides of the roof, the roses outside, and the songs of the birds and the yellowing harvest, and a distant hum of the city—to live here, drenched in spiritual peace, body and soul

growing healed in the silence and the beauty—that were very sweet. A little while snatched from the world, to sit, like any hermit of the Thebaid, face to face with God and one's own soul, that were remedy and refreshment. No wonder the Children of Mary's Society and the Annual Ladies' Retreat, which Mother Xaveria fostered by every means in her power, have thriven exceedingly, and spread beyond the most sanguine expectations.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOTHER XAVERIA'S LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

The summer before her death a sadly suggestive incident occurred. She told the nuns one day at recreation how the little crosses in the cemetery looked rusty and shabby, and wished that, before a ceremony which was very close at hand, and would bring many visitors to the convent, the little God's Acre might have been as reverently in order as befitted a place where saints slept their last sleep. It was a passing wish, and there was scarcely time to do anything before the festival-day; but the convent was very full, it being vacation-time with Superiors from other convents and their nuns, "home for the holidays." What was her delight, when that evening, as she went to pray by the graves, she found a whole happy troop of nuns of all degree furbishing and painting for dear life!

She deserved such ready obedience, for she had always impressed on those she taught or influenced that a Superior was the representative of God, and so to be honoured. A crucifix, she would say, need not be of ivory or of gold to be beautiful and sacred to us; and to help her in her holy office, as Simon

the Cyrenean helped our Lord to carry His Cross, was to win great merit. The Superior was to be honoured as such. "She hides herself behind her work," was a great praise for her to bestow on one of her daughters. She would have the Superior hidden behind her position, draped over what might be poor raiment with the cloak of office, which would show like a queen's mantle of gold and silver.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," was often on her lips. If she could be angry, it was with uncharitableness of any sort. "More than death, or losses, or trouble, or sickness," she would say, "I should dread in my children a want of love. Dear child," she said to one who passed summary judgment on others, "don't be so quick to judge. If you were on your death-bed, it would come back like a weight against your heart, with those words of denunciation, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'" Her own charity was very great. There was one instance of her accepting from an affectionate bungler what was really a hindrance, though her would-be assistant thought it help. Though it sorely impeded her, she did not show it by even a tremor of her expressive face. Indeed, the hindrance was quite made up for in her mind by the pleasure it gave her daughter.

Even in those days of her weakness her joyful spirit did not fail her. She was always joyous by nature. She used to say that our Father in heaven was so loving and good, and she was happy as any

happy child in the bright home prepared by its father. Her confidence was so full that nothing seemed able to cloud it.

When one of her flock desired a spiritual book which she thought helpful, it should be procured at any cost. Once when the Mother Procuratrix grumbled, she said, "You would not refuse her food or clothing. Is the spirit to be less considered than the body?" Her own mental diet was very simple—the "Imitation of Christ," which she always carried in her pocket, and her Rule-book, which she was often seen perusing with the fervour of a young novice; these made her spiritual library pretty well.

The school-children were not forgotten when once they had left school. She followed them with her prayers and her thoughts. In some cases, where their families met reverses, she used all the interest in her hands for them—and the Mother-General of a great Order is a powerful person—to get them employment and set them on their feet again; or if one of the family were going abroad, she would write to the Bishops and other dignitaries in his or her interest.

The last Christmas Eve she was on her feet, when all the nuns had retired to rest, because they had to be up for the midnight mass, she stole to the infirmary, where was a sick lay-sister, and spent the silent hours watching and praying with her. She had a special tenderness for the sick, and dispensed money for their relief royally. This tenderness of hers made her a

very sweet sick-nurse to Mother Scholastica, who was dying slowly all those five years. Mother Xaveria was in and out with her all day; she was with her the first thing every morning, the last thing every night. When at last the patient sufferer's long imprisonment came to an end, Mother Xaveria knelt by her during her agony, and would yield no one her place.

Mother Teresa Ball seemed to have willed to her some of her business faculty. I am afraid, however, in her bargains she often went unfairly behind a seller's back and *prayed* the property into her possession. This was the case with the fields which lie beyond the garden and the trellised wall of roses. They used to form part of another property, and they stood right between the convent and its farm. Mother Xaveria set her heart upon obtaining those fields. She used to amuse her secular friends by setting them at work to wire-pull for her, and by her confidence that if the owners only knew *how much* she wanted the fields they would give them up. Sure enough the fields came into the market in the most unexpected way, and she was able to enlarge the convent demesne to seventy acres—a lovely stretch of open country for nuns and children to roam at their will.

Mother Xaveria was always anxious that wherever a convent was established it should have charge of the National School in that place. At Killarney the

National School was vested in the Commissioners, and she advanced a sum to buy it out. Having the nuns as teachers was no doubt greatly to purify and elevate the children, despite that the crucifix or the statue of the Mother of God had to be hidden by closed doors during school-hours. The Order was specially favoured by the class of ladies who came to join it. For example, at Stephen's Green the National School is in charge of Sister Peter, who was a leading official under the National Board. Nothing could be happier for Loretto than that Sister Peter should give up her honourable office, and her well-earned comfort and dignity, to become Sister Peter of the Loretto Stephen's Green National Schools, and live all her life nearly in the schools, which stretch away to Leeson Lane, among poor little children, half clad and fed, but beautiful as Florentine angels. "We always say," said a nun laughing, "that Sister Peter lives in the lane." Well, she looked as happy as though the lane were a heaven of azure and white billowy cloudland, with all those child-faces looking through the rifts.

Mother Xaveria's first bit of building had been for Bray Convent; her last was likewise. To the infant school, which was their first memento of her, she added a beautiful study-hall, and enlarged and improved dormitories. It was on her last visitation she saw these things were necessary. She drew up a hasty plan for the new buildings, but when the architect

who was to be in charge brought her her plan put in shape, she was very ill, yet not too ill to go closely into details.

In January 1886 the Mother's term of office expired. Being so very weakly, she desired to resign her position, but the Chapter assembled at Rathfarnham unanimously re-elected her. The nuns were in ecstasies of pleasure. She herself rallied wonderfully, though all autumn she had lain under a bad lung attack. She became for a time her old bright self. The nuns, sighing for the touch of a vanished hand, dwell fondly on that time when they hoped she had been given back to them from the grave. They write of how lovely the recreations were with her in the midst—of how they used to try to analyse in conversation her overweening charm for them. The school-children long ago had found it sweeter to please Mother Xaveria than any one else, whatever their individual preferences. Her spiritual daughters write it down, her humility, her self-forgetfulness, her kindness, her holiness, and have not answered themselves. Mother Xaveria was a saint, and also a most lovely-natured woman. There was that about her appealed to the human element as well as the superhuman.

In the summer of 1886 she got through an immense deal of work. The visitation of Stephen's Green, Bray, Gorey, Enniscorthy, Wexford, Kilkenny, and Killarney followed each other in rapid succession.

After this she attended the distribution of prizes in all the houses, and came back from her expeditions in bright spirits, and better in health than she had been for a long time. Settled down at Rathfarnham in the summer weather, she took up eagerly the preparations for the Ladies' Retreat, received the ladies as usual, and presided in the refectory. The third day of the Retreat there was a distribution of prizes in the poor-school. It was damp weather, and the Sisters implored her not to attend; but she loved the poor children, and could not be prevailed upon to rest at home. Returning, she caught a chill, and the alarmed nuns found they could not restore heat to her body; before nightfall she was dangerously ill with congestion of the lungs. From this attack she never recovered, though she lingered on, and at times was able to appear for a little while at recreation, which she pleaded so hard to do, that sometimes the Infirmarian could not refuse her. But these snatches of convalescence grew fewer and fainter, and by degrees she relinquished her loving hold on the great duties and joys and the little pleasures of her life. She felt it very hard when she had to give up her morning meditation with the nuns in choir; soon after her visits to the Blessed Sacrament had to be sacrificed; last of all, her daily Mass and Holy Communion.

For some time she used to struggle up to make her meditation in her cell. When she was allowed

to sit up for a short time, a Sister brought her an amusing book, which she took with a grateful smile; but when asked afterwards if she liked it, she said, "Dear child, I can only read for a few minutes at a time, and then it must be something to help me on my road to heaven."

Soon the Infirmarian had to recite the prayers for her, and she, so weak as not to be able to follow, lay and looked her communion in them. The Rosary, the Morning Oblation, the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, all had to be recited for her, and if any were omitted in deference to her weariness and suffering, she found it out at once. "I have been faithful so long to that prayer," she would say, "it is not worth while leaving it out now." Her rosary beads were in her hands in the daytime, about her neck at night. Her tired thoughts were lifted up first to her Lord and God; but there was room in them too for His faithful friends and servants, to whom she had especially looked during her life. Besides His dear Mother, there were the angels, and St. Francis Xavier, St. John Berchmans, and St. Gertrude, whom she had learned in her Benedictine school to look up to and love—these, and many another, were the friends of her death-bed.

During her last Lent on earth she did the Stations of the Cross every night, kissing her crucifix with ardour for each station. Often the Infirmarian awakened at night to see by the dim night-lamp her

charge, with eyes larger and more luminous than ever, gazing at the great crucifix at her bed's-foot in a passion of prayer. Once she saw that she was observed, and said next morning to the Infirmarian, "You saw me last night looking at our Lord on His hard bed. Ah! I am ashamed to say I was longing sorely for relief from my own pain." "He is so kind and tender," said the sister; "He would love you for craving relief of Him." At night when she awoke, she would kiss the five wounds on her little crucifix. In Passion Week when the great crucifix in her room was veiled, she used to lie directing patient looks towards it, but it was only when it was once more unveiled that she said how greatly she had missed it.

During that week she asked the Infirmarian was there any chance of her spending Easter in heaven. Feeling very ill one day, she said, "Oh, shall I soon get to heaven?" The poor Sister said, "Darling Reverend Mother, what should we do without you?" Mother Xaveria looked very sad as she replied, "Dear child, I am no use now; I can give neither help or counsel. I should be so glad to die if the nuns would not fret, but I fear they would." Again the Sister asked her, if she were gone what would she wish her, her child, to do. Mother Xaveria opened her eyes in a startled way, like one coming back from sleep, and then said, "To keep God in sight, and promote always charity and peace."

She had rallied towards the end of 1887, after

receiving the sacred oils. There was a band of young nuns going out then to India and Australia. She had them with her as often as she could, and gathered them about her every evening for prayers. She took so much interest in the little parting gifts she was giving them, and wrote most affectionately in their books. After they had gone she relapsed into pain and weakness. When some one mourned that a week ago she had been so bright, she said, "It was only a struggle I made that my poor little missionaries might not go away too fretted."

She was never deceived by the alternations of her malady. At the beginning of the year in which she was to die she said to a nun who was devotedly attached to her, "Whatever happens this year, and it may contain many crosses, dear child, make up your mind to live and work for God alone. And now remember," she said, seeing the nun breaking down, "you are to be very cheerful, and to take a good long open-air walk every day." She had a good many of her daughters to console in those days. "You will not be desolate," she used to say; "you will have Jesus, your Spouse, no matter what happens. What can it matter about a poor creature, whether she comes or goes, while you have Him?" She was the most unexacting of invalids. She always kept her watch by her, lest the nun staying with her should overstay her time, and be late for other things.

One afternoon, when the room was very quiet, there

came a tiny rapping at the door. When the Infirmarian opened it, an enterprising little lady of seven stepped in with the most assured look of welcome, and her pinafore hugged up very tightly. She calmly seated herself on the floor by Mother Xaveria's bed, and proceeded to hold up for her inspection a number of presents received that morning for her birthday. "This is what I gave myself," she said, holding up one of her best tributes. The Infirmarian looked on in wonder, but there was a good deal of whispered discussion which she was not allowed to hear. That evening Mother Xaveria, who had been up a few hours, procrastinated about going to bed, and the reason was made manifest when the same little lassie appeared, and taking her by the hand, drew her across the corridor to the school-room, which was the quarters of the very little folk, and where some entertainment had been organised. The Infirmarian was rather put out over the whole proceeding; but Mother Xaveria, in all her sweet life, never could throw cold water on a child's pleasure.

I have said she asked for nothing; neither did she refuse anything. When this or that was brought to tempt her weak appetite, she struggled to take a little of it, for the sake of the love that had prepared it. When at last she could not eat, her distress was keen. When she rallied, she was glad with her daughters; when their hopes were dashed to earth, and her paroxysms of terrible suffering came on, she

lay looking at them with eyes that told their pain was added to hers. When she was suffering most, acts of resignation flowed fast and free from her lips. "Do not fret," she would say to them; "God's will be done. He knows best, He loves most." Many standing by that bed, listening to such acts, while the sweat of pain broke out on her forehead, would recall, "And being in an agony, He prayed the longer."

Early in February 1888 she had a very bad change, and was anointed on the 11th. She said to a Sister who was with her one day, and who was grieving greatly, "Kneel down now, and offer up my life to God. You have done everything for me, but He knows best. He will take care of you all, and things will go on just the same when I am gone. But I want you to promise me that you will be to whoever takes my place all you have been to me." This Sister was one of her own novices, and they had a special love and reverence for her.

She was somewhat fretted that the nuns would go on hoping for her life, and wearying Heaven with prayers for it. In the beginning she had said, "Mind, if you pray me well, it must be *very* well," for she had no mind to live unless she might work. It grieved her to see their gladness in those deceitful rallies, and their depression when she was again prostrated. She could not bear to see their disappointments, she said, and she steadfastly refused to

join the prayers for her recovery. With her to live was Christ, and to die was gain. She knew it would take a miracle to cure her, and she only desired God to deal with her as He saw fit.

One thing weighed on her mind in those last days. She was anxious to yield up to the Archbishop of Dublin her office, which a little earlier he would not permit her to abdicate. "He will see now," she said, "that I am not going to recover, and will appoint a day for the election of a Superior in my place." She was to die in harness after all, for the Archbishop was in Rome, and when he returned was delayed by this and that, so that he did not get to Rathfarnham till the 5th of July, three days before Mother Xaveria's death. When he was brought to her, she was sinking fast, but made a brave effort to come back and speak to him. "Do you know the Archbishop?" some one asked. "Oh, yes," said the Mother. He then gave her the Pope's special blessing. She had not strength to ask him, as she had wished, to make a visitation of the house, but curiously enough he said as he was leaving that he would come back in August for the purpose of visitation.

Even in those last days she kept her kindly human sympathies. On the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua she remembered to order that the nuns should have extended recreation, and on St. Aloysius' Feast, three weeks before her death, she had her bed pulled closer to the window, that she might see the children at

their play. Her room, which the nuns show you like the shrine of a saint, is one of the old-world rooms, all panelled and cupboarded. It looks to the house-front, into the boughs, as I remember it, of a great sycamore, whose feathered folk were all making music as if death and pain were not. She suffered very much with an intermittent fever in her last days; it used to rack her with burning pain for several hours of the day. When relief came, her first sigh was always, "Ah! God is very good."

She had great consolations. Every day the kind chaplain, Father Walshe, gave her Holy Communion, suiting his time to hers. The Dominicans at Tallaght came every Sunday and said Mass in her cell. The Pope sent her his blessing many times, as did the Generals of the various Orders. She wore constantly a Sacred Heart scapular the Pope sent her, and he gave her a special indulgence for the hour of death.

From the 29th of June she was dying fast. She had an incessant cough, which shook sorely her already emaciated frame. Her children suffered greatly in not being able to relieve her. All that week following they came to her bedside as one would to a saint's. As soon as one was off duty she would hasten to kneel there and be blessed by the wasted hand. One morning when Father Walshe came, to give her Holy Communion, she was too weak to open her lips, but the look of disappointment when he turned to go away brought him back at once

with a promise that he would return a little later. She was able to receive when he did return. One of the Sisters asked her on the morning of the 1st of July if she knew her: she was not able to answer, but after a while she whispered the name to show that she did. On Tuesday the 3rd she was again anointed and received the last absolution. On that day she was a little better, and said several times, "May God Almighty bless you all," lifting up her frail hands. When any one did anything for her, her beautiful eyes followed them with pathetic gratitude. Once she asked if it were wrong to moan at night. Her thoughts were running on the profound silence, which, after 9 P.M., is the rule in a convent.

The kindness of the priests was wonderful. They came again and again to comfort her with absolutions and prayers. From the evening of Saturday the 7th she was really dying. The nuns thronged the corridor, watching with her through that last hour they should have her on earth. The nuns thought a strange holiness and sweetness descended upon the house as the life in her flickered lower and lower. In the early summer morning, when the Dominican Father from Tallaght came to say her Mass, she was only faintly breathing. He knelt by her for a quarter of an hour, giving her one absolution after another. They said that just at the last a light like the Day-star flashed over her face; her eyes opened, clear,

translucent, like wells of joy; for a moment she was radiant, with a clear rose-colour lighting up her face; then the eyes closed, and gradually the light went out. The crucifix in her hand was clasped so tightly that after death they could scarce release it.

She would perhaps have lived longer if she had spent herself less. She never had thought but to give, give, give—all that was in her of strength, of sweetness. She sapped probably a bodily health which, conserved, might have tided her over a few more years. However, she would not have said so; she would have said it was all God's will. She glorified God greatly in her living and greatly in her dying. To her spiritual daughters she left a memory most lovely and enduring—a light to help them on to heaven. As her room was a sanctuary in those last days, her grave with its Celtic cross, white against the trellis of roses, a tall lily each side of it, and a clump of feathery pampas grass near at hand, is a sacred place where many go to kneel and pray. "Worn out in God's service," the nuns say. Yet perhaps it was the flame of her will to serve Him that kept her living all those years, and made her work so far-reaching and so blessed. She went to her Master with her hands full of fruitful labour for Him.

After her death, tributes to her great sanctity came pouring in. An archbishop presided at her funeral service, and enough priests stood about her grave to furnish a new world with a whole Church. Her old

pupils came in love and grief. Letters and wreaths from all parts of the world and the country were sent. The letters, which the nuns treasure, from great dignitaries of the Church, who had once known this holy soul, and been edified at it, are full of beautiful tributes—a veritable "cloud of witnesses," and I do not cite testimony only because I have tried to make Mother Xaveria's life bear eloquent witness, so far as I could, but it was a hidden life buried in God. Of such a death as hers one might write with Christina Rossetti—

> "Lying a dying,
> Have done with vain sighing;
> Life not lost but treasured,
> God Almighty pleasured,
> God's daughter fetched and carried,
> Christ's bride betrothed and married.
> Our tender, gentle dove,
> Meek-eyed and simple,
> Our love goes home to Love:
> There shall she walk in white,
> Where God shall be the Light,
> And God the Temple."

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE SEED PROSPERED AT HOME AND IN INDIA.

I SHOULD like now to give some idea of the kingdom Mother Xaveria ruled over. From each of the five continents, when the news of her death went abroad, there came lamentations so heartfelt and pathetic, that one says instinctively, reading the simple expressions of grief, "See those nuns, how they love one another!" Souvenirs of the beloved dead Mother went on all the winds of the world. How precious and holy they were I gather from a letter which, in its proper place, I overlooked. This letter, written to console those far away, says, among many other beautiful things :—

"We laid our own precious little Mother in the grave a couple of hours ago. She is buried at Mother Scholastica's head. Everything was beautiful and solemn and reverent. . . . Your cross came late, but I put it in our Mother's poor empty stall. . . . Last night all her own were round her at two o'clock, when the coffin was closed. We had her all to ourselves,

and each of us could kiss her and cry over her. We raised her poor hand, and put it on the head of each in blessing. I asked for two blessings, one for you, and I kissed her in the name of her absent child. I have three pictures which I held against her lips, one for you, the others for Sisters Genevieve and Brendan, her own novices. We filled the coffin with most lovely crimson and white roses. Each of us put in a rose. I put in one for you, and one for Sister M. Aloysia."

This was written to a nun at Killarney, one of the home foundations. The nuns were very happy in securing beautiful places for the convents. In Ireland this comes easily enough, for there are deserted mansions in town and country, often so beautiful and lavish that they were "My Lord's Folly" or "My Lady's Caprice," and which now would be left to the owls and the bats if there were not such big, generous families as those of our Lady of Loretto to inhabit them.

I have described Rathfarnham, and Stephen's Green, which, in the town-house of the Earl of Charleville, was the next foundation. Navan came in the same year, and ranks among the most distinguished of the foundations, having, with a fine worldliness allied to its other-worldliness, sent its pupils into the arena to contest and win the big prizes which we Irish Catholics have been too apt to leave undisputed to the Protestant or undenominational Women's Colleges. In

1836 came George's Street, and five years later Dalkey. In 1843 Mother Teresa Ball sent her forces into the South, and, with Mother Benedicta Somers' aid, established Gorey Convent. In 1850 the convent at Bray was opened, perched high, amid its seventy-two acres of land, and looking over as lovely a view as heart could desire. On one side the indented and lovely shore of the Bay of Dublin, on the other "the Silver Spears," as the old Irish called them, the greater and lesser Sugar-Loaf Mountains, say their prosaic descendants, which are the gates of Wicklow, the loveliest land of mountain and river, of valley and purple and golden bog-land, with the silver sea incessantly fretting at its boundaries. After Bray came in rapid succession Fermoy by the Southern Blackwater, Omagh and Letterkenny in the heart of the Protestant North, and Balbriggan, another great white house by the sea, some miles to the north of Dublin. Fermoy, Youghal, Omagh, and Navan are the only houses in Ireland which are not still joined to Rathfarnham, they having elected to be under their respective Bishops. Fermoy is a magnificent convent, in a town full of big colleges and churches. Its little dependency, Youghal, is a sanatorium chiefly for the big house. It is a long, straight, somewhat Spanish-looking house, with verandahs and green shutters, and a tree-planted courtyard, in that most ghost-haunted town of the world, where Desmonds meet you at every turn, and you may dream in the very oriel

where Spenser read the "Faery Queen" for Walter Raleigh, or sit under the yew-trees where Sir Walter first made a chimney of his mouth. The great Atlantic breakers, even of a fine October day, roar at the land like mad bulls, with tremendous shocks and rebounds; the spray of them is over you in a silver waterfall, and the reverberation of them stupifies all your senses. Some day it will tear at the foundations of the quiet convent, which, with its big day-school, its little community, and its half-dozen lady-boarders, has not climbed the hill sufficiently to be safely out of reach of this ravening monster.

Killarney comes next, and is, as one might expect, the most beautiful in situation of all the convents. It was Torc View Hotel once upon a time. It is three miles from the town, which also is so hidden in its valley, that from the convent point of vantage only the top of a spire or some such elevated thing speaks of its neighbourhood. The convent is on a high hillside, with Muckross below it, and stretching farther away in front the Lower Lake, with Innisfallen and Ross Castle full in view. To the left, high in air, is rugged Mangerton, and farther on the lone and lofty peak of Torc. Opposite the convent is a chain of great hills, which runs on uninterruptedly to the far west of Kerry and Dingle Bay, which of a clear day the nuns can see like a silver shield. The nuns seem as far away from the world in this wilderness of wood and water, amid those eternal

great hills, as if they inhabited a hospice amid the Lower Alps. It is always lovely, they say, in spring, when the north-west wind brings heavenly colours to the mountains; in the early summer, when the woods are a transparent lime-green; in autumn, when they take fire, and every tree-top is a roaring cresset; most beautiful of all perhaps in winter, when a snow-fall has come, and those kings in ermine stand so solemnly, and every tree has its delicate frozen tracery, and there will be a red sunset, making "a scarlet fleece," as a modern poet says, of all the wool-packs.

After Killarney came Wexford, Kilkenny, which has especially fine schools, and Enniscorthy. In Mother Xaveria's chief Superiorship there were three more convents founded in Ireland—Clonmel, Mullingar, and Charleville House, Rathgar.

The oldest of the colonisations was that of Calcutta. Mother Teresa Ball's mother-house was but nineteen years old when the call came for volunteers to India. The case of the Catholics in India had been desperate indeed from the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits. Those who held up the banner of Christ there were few in number, and fighting against tremendous odds. How Dr. Carew, Vicar-General of Bengal, heard of Mother Teresa Ball so early as 1841, I know not; suffice it to say, that in that year he sent a deputation of an English Jesuit and a German Doctor of Divinity to wait on the still young foundress, and entreat her

to send a colony of her daughters to gather in the Eastern harvest, going to waste for want of labourers. At first Mother Teresa flatly refused. Her Order was scarcely yet on its feet, and to weaken it by sending away a number of its best members was not to be thought of. "Very well," said my German doctor, assuming the strong hand, "will you answer to God then for the souls of the heathen children who are perishing like flies?" Mother Teresa was caught at once. She asked a little time for prayer, and then returning to him, told him she consented. From the number of volunteers, far more than were required, he took six professed nuns, with Mother Delphina Hart as Superior. Six postulants joined them, and they left Kingstown on the 23rd of August, Mother Teresa Ball watching in floods of tears from a tower in the grounds at Dalkey Convent till the ship sunk below the horizon.

At Calcutta they were received not only by the Catholic community, but by the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, and his suite, and all the European and half the native population. The Governor-General sanctioned his daughters' going on board the *Scotia* to welcome the nuns, and their accompanying them to the great thanksgiving service in the Cathedral; so it will be seen they were received in no grudging manner by those good Protestants. After the service the nuns were escorted in a kind of triumphal procession to their convent, which, rather to their dismay,

they found to be not only a palace itself, but palatially furnished, and so not at all to the liking of those lovers of holy poverty. It was a funny experience altogether for nuns, and they must have been rather glad when the fashionable crowd had departed, and the illuminations were gone out, and they were left to their luxurious cells. Be sure they soon changed all that.

They were four months on the voyage, and had only landed at Calcutta on the 30th of December 1841; but so anxious were they to set to work, and such willing help did they receive, that they were able to open their schools on the 10th of January. The convent, which was the palace of the famous Impey of Warren Hastings' time, was a gift to the nuns from the Ladies' Committee of Calcutta. The fine compounds before and behind were, and are, beautifully laid out. One enters the old palace by a trellised way, all covered up in flowers and climbing plants. The nuns made the two great ball-rooms,—70 feet by 30,—which are connected by high glass doors, community-room and study-hall. Walls and ceiling are splendidly frescoed, and the roof is held up by great pillars. Outside there is a prospect of white European houses, each in its garden, for this is the aristocratic quarter of Chowringhee, and looking snowy amid palms and plantains, and side by side with the magnificent "dropping-well of fire" they call "Flame of the Forest." From their house-tops the nuns can

see the bay and surrounding country, and the Hooghly flowing by, and very grateful it is there, or on the many verandahs and terraces, in the early morning and after sundown.

In May 1842, behold the nuns were asked for another foundation at Chandernagore! Mother Delphina, with her *six* professed nuns, objected strenuously, but to as little purpose as Mother Teresa had at home. The Bishop and the Governor were alike insistent. The convent was ready, and the climate of Chandernagore was a very sanatorium after Calcutta. It is a beautiful country, with superb vegetation, and Dr. Carew rather made a compliment of his insistence, as he urged that the nuns' health required this place to turn to when one was sickening. So Mother Delphina herself went to Chandernagore with two other sisters and a lay-sister, Veronica Fox, a peculiarly lovely soul, whose life reads like a romance, and who died afterwards of cholera caught by the bedside of a patient. At Calcutta, the decimated little community had in hands an orphanage and poor-school, immensely crowded, as well as a boarding-school for little ladies, and a day-school for children of the middle classes. Catholics and Protestants, Moslems and Heathens, crowd the nuns' schools, and photographs of their pupils will run you the gamut of human splendour and misery, from the daughters of Parsees or high-caste Hindoos, olive-eyed, lovely, languishing, necklaced with pearls large

as hen's-eggs, draped in barbaric fire and gold, down to the white-clad demure little savages from the devil-worshipping people of Chota Nagpore, whom you will see crowding about the meek nuns.

In the October of 1842 the orphanage was transferred to Chandernagore, and arrangements were made for including, as well as the destitute, children for whom their parents desired to pay a small fee. The nuns gathered in the children munificently, never looking to the morrow, and a time came at Chandernagore when matters looked ominous. But at this juncture Mr. Robert Tucker, a Protestant magistrate of Futtehpore, selected the nuns as the objects of his beneficence, and began paying them an income of about £150 a month, which just covered the expenses of the orphanage. This generous friend and great-hearted gentleman was killed in the mutiny.

In early September of 1842, one of the young postulants died, just before the day of her clothing as a nun, which was to be on the 8th, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin's Nativity. She died after a very short illness, and was clothed for her death, and laid in the grave in the nun's habit she had so ardently desired. On the 8th four of her sister-postulants were clothed, the church being crowded with the rank and fashion of Calcutta.

Towards the close of the year, fourteen more nuns, ardently besought, came out from Rathfarnham, and

with this timely reinforcement a new convent was opened at Serampore.

Soon after came the terrible cholera. The Mistress of Schools died of it, and a young German Lutheran lady who was teaching in the schools, and who on her death-bed asked for and received baptism into the Church.

For two years a little colony of nuns, under Mother Joseph Hogan, had charge of the female wards of the General Hospital of Calcutta, but for one reason or other they were obliged to relinquish it. In 1845 an orphanage and schools were established at Chittagong, in Eastern Bengal, which some years later were transferred to Dacca. In 1845 a convent was established at Darjeeling, high on the Himalayan slopes, nearly 8000 feet above the sea-level. Now-a-days one gets to it from Calcutta in twenty-eight hours, doing most of the journey on a little mountain railway, which leaps chasms and gorges, glides over waterfalls, is half the time like a fly on the ceiling, and finally lands you in mid-air. In the forties, the poor nuns took to the journey a month on the river, and fifteen or sixteen days in a cart or on an elephant's back. Darjeeling is of course cool, with the perpetual snows above it, but on a southern slope looks away from the snow, and one sees far below the steaming plain, with the rivers dragging through it like little silver snakes, and the higher country, a paradise of colour, with pale blue deepening to indigo, rose to scarlet, yellow to

orange, and a strange light-green which is now grey, now purple. The old nuns say it is not half so lovely as in the early days, before the great forests were cut down to make room for the tea-plantations. One must get away to a spur of the mountain to see the Himalayas, silver peaks, awful up in the intense blue sky, an illimitable distance beyond where the lovely network of flower and leaf cuts off sharply at the perpetual snow-line.

Darjeeling Convent is lovely, a quaint Eastern house, with parlours all of glass, and gabled, high roofs, where the nuns' cells are, and dropping over all a superb tree from a high plateau, which seems in the picture to be rising slowly to show you the convent below.

In 1847 schools and orphanage were opened at Intally, a suburb of Calcutta, and were soon crowded. The orphanage now numbers 250 European and Eurasian girls, and the separate native orphanage 100 girls. Between these two there is a nursery where little children are taken care of, who are too young for school. After the terrible cyclone of 1864, Mother Delphina opened two asylums for starving women and children. The babies died off like flies, and to baptize the dying ones stratagem was resorted to, as the asylums depended mainly for support on wealthy Hindoos, and the place was crowded with native servants. Mother Delphina used to carry in her bag, on her daily visit, eau de cologne and water

in two similar bottles, and while she laved the hot little head with the cooling spirit, it was easy to substitute one fluid for the other, and murmur the baptismal formula over the little one. After a time the native mothers came to look upon the words and the laving as efficacious, and would crowd round with their little ones, holding them up to be blessed.

In 1866 Allahabad was founded; in 1872 Lucknow; in 1874 Hazarabaugh; in 1875 Bettiah. Assensol, opened in 1876, is the Indian noviciate of the Order, in a country so vast and lonely that the nuns could not define the extent of their own territory. It is so uninvaded by the foot of man, that the novices go on long walks through the open country, changing the direction from day to day. Occasionally they peep into a Christian or an Indian village. Sometimes they roam through the paddy-fields—which sounds home-like—and enjoy, or the reverse, the excitement of inadvertently rousing a snake. Once they came on the bones of a human being picked clean by the jackals. This noviciate was filled from time to time by recruits from home. Mother Joseph Hogan came home in 1876, and brought back seventeen postulants. In 1879 Naini Tal Convent was founded; in 1882 Purmeah.

Ranchi, in Chota Nagpore, is a later foundation still. This is the exclusively native mission. It receives none but the natives, who are called Khols. The children in the schools are not taught English,

or any European habits and ways. They are instructed in their own tongue, and taught reading, writing, and arithmetic in it; they are also taught needle-work, house-work, gardening and cooking. Dr. Goëthals, Archbishop of Calcutta, founded this mission. The first Sister chosen to be sent down was one with a large knowledge of native dialects, as well as a skill in medicine which makes her as good as a doctor, a turn for cookery of all kinds, and a considerable knowledge of gardening, landscape and otherwise. When the nuns came to Ranchi, after a very toilsome journey, they found a kind welcome awaiting them from the Jesuit fathers, who have in charge this mountainous district, and who have everywhere in India been the kindest friends of the Loretto nuns. There are 50,000 native Christians in the district. The nuns found attached to their convent an old orchard, overgrown and luxuriant. Sister Teresa took it in hand, and it now produces quantities of beautiful fruit, mangoes and peaches, grapes, and pomegranates a foot wide. By-and-by, with money which God will send, the orchard will provide for the Kohl girls, who, of course, exist mainly on vegetables and fruit. The nuns live in a Baboo gentleman's disused bungalow. The Zenana, screened round with lattice-work, is the very thing for the Kohl girls. Kohl men are polygamous, and their great difficulty in becoming Christians is that they have to give up their wives. The wives are looked

down upon, poor things, as creatures without souls, and the Kohl women were the last to come as catechumens, having been persuaded for so long that they had no souls to save. The little girls are wild creatures, and occasionally run away, being come of a wandering tribe, but return quite gladly to the Sisters. In the pictures one sees they are savages, for all the snowy robe, and the hands demurely crossed on the curiously conformed little bodies, and the rosaries hanging round their necks. Devil-worship, that is to say, sacrifices in propitiation to him, is a thing missionaries have to fight hard against in Ranchi.

The work done by the nuns since they went out in 1841, in feeding and healing souls and bodies, is incalculable. Converts have come to them in crowds from every sect, not only the Hindoos and Moslems, but Parsees, who are fire-worshippers, and even Mormons. Then, the schools are crowded with Protestant girls, and many of the kindest friends of the Order have been Protestants; and it is no wonder that, discovering Catholicity to be the simplest and fullest Christianity, many of them have been received into the Church. The Order in India has had its martyrs. In twenty years from the time the nuns went out in 1841, death, in the form of cholera or some other disease of the deadly climate, had carried of forty-two nuns. They have not the alleviations of ordinary European life in India; they work hard and they live

hard. In hot weather they wear all white habits, instead of the heavier material; that is all.

Day by day the nuns push the outposts of Christ farther into that heathen country, which, considering its strange and horrible superstitions, may truly be said to be the kingdom of Satan. Help has never failed them, be it of money or workers. God has fructified this, as He did the home missions, beyond all expectations. Every Loretto nun, be she here or there, stands at her post, ready for the word which to-morrow may send her into strange climes and among savage people. On this earth she has no abiding-place. God has helped wonderfully; but as when He sends His grace He asks co-operation, so, blessing the Loretto nun, He asked cheerful readiness and patient abnegation, and He was not denied them.

The Ladies' Committee of 1841, the good and gentle and generous souls, who were Protestant as well as Catholic, would have made life easy for the nuns, with an ayah appointed to wait on every cell, and the luxuries and conveniences heralded in by the splendid feast laid in the ball-room. The daughters of Loretto, however, preferred a life more like that of Nazareth. They discarded all the kindly gifts and the astonished servants by degrees. In lowliness and hardship they served according to their Rule, and found a happiness and ease of spirit far beyond what those loving friends would have desired for them.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW THE SEED PROSPERED—MORE FOREIGN MISSIONS.

In May 1875, the first batch of nuns, nine in number, started for Ballarat, for which they had been urgently besought by Dr. O'Connor, Bishop of the diocese. He had asked Mother Teresa Ball long ago for a community, but she had been obliged to refuse his request. With Mother Scholastica and ever-increasing prosperity at Rathfarnham, he gained his desire. The nuns left Rathfarnham on the 20th of May, in the very "sweet o' the year," when hawthorn and lilac are in loveliest flower, and the birds sing as if dew and honey were in their throats. They said "Good-bye" over-night to their Sisters. The Mass was at four in the morning, and only a few special nuns were allowed to get up—Mother Xaveria, Mother Concepcion, Mother Angela Murphy, and a few others. Of Mother Angela I have not said in its proper place how much the Foreign Missions owed to her. She was in a special way their guardian, and she undertook for Mother Xaveria the correspondence and claims of the foreign houses. She gave herself to this vocation with a

thoroughness and devotion characteristic of her, and when she died, a year before Mother Xaveria, it was a loosening of one of the links that held the saintly Superior to life. Mother Angela never rested on earth while work was to be done. "Requiescat!" many said, when the tireless feet and hands at last were still.

The poor nuns drove away with their hearts breaking from the kindly mother-house. They sailed from Plymouth on the 24th of May, commending themselves to Our Lady, Help of Christians. They arrived at Melbourne on the 19th of July, and proceeded at once to Ballarat. They had kept their coming very secret, perhaps remembering a precedent at Calcutta more than forty years earlier; but as the train steamed into the station, it was met with cries of "Glory be to God, here are the nuns." Ballarat, like everywhere else, has its share of the faithful Irish, who, no matter how wild and reckless they become, are always devout at heart. As they drove down Sturt Street with the Bishop in his carriage, the joy-bells of the Cathedral pealed out joyously. The following Sunday there was a public *Te Deum* at the Cathedral, and the nuns were well-nigh mobbed by joyful folk crowding around to get a look at them, the mothers lifting up their children to catch sight of them. In the temporary home provided for them they were beset with visitors at first, some of whom burst into tears at the sight of them, because they brought back the old country and old times.

Ballarat is one of the mining towns which spring up,

fair and handsome, as if by magic. The streets are beautiful, and the public buildings stately and ornate. Luck fluctuates among Ballarat folk. It is a perpetual up and down among the gold-miners, and a man who this year will have £40,000, next year will not have forty pence. The town now is getting steady, but even among the people who are making its young trade and commerce, there is a good deal of the old unsettledness. In a community of this sort the appliances of religion are apt to be behind-hand. We, who live in the old world, where the Church has been a-building many a century, perhaps scarcely realise what an inheritance we have. Those nuns were the first seen in Ballarat. A hundred miles away there was a community of Sisters of Mercy, the only other nuns in the province. No wonder the people did not know what to do with their new possessions. The nuns were flooded with presents, from a hundred pound cheque and a silver tea-service down to kangaroos and laughing jackasses.

After a temporary stay in a fine wooden house by the Cathedral, where Dean O'Connor's cook and housekeeper catered for them as when Lucullus dines with Lucullus, and they had to invoke the highest dignitaries to get something they held plain enough to eat, they removed to their own beautiful convent, which had belonged to the Member for Ballarat, Mr. Wynne. It looks on one side to the Botanic Gardens, with a great lake farther away; on the other side it turns to Sturt

Street, with Ballarat partly in the valley below, partly climbing the opposite hill. Beyond are beautiful mountains. They found the air most delightful, "like heaven," writes a nun, and invigorating to an extraordinary degree, laden with scents, not only acacia, musk, and gum-tree, but the dear hawthorn and lilac to remind them of home. The arum lilies, which at home are kept for the altars, here grew out of doors, sometimes thirty blossoms on a single plant. Two years later the Botanical Society brought a number of home-singing birds, and let them loose to acclimatise. Some came to settle in the convent gardens, and what was the nuns' delight to hear them, thrushes, blackbirds, linnets, all the dear home-music, after two years of looking at painted birds silent as ghosts!

More missionaries came out from home from time to time, and postulants from the new country. The nuns have now in hands two convents in Ballarat. The second, at Dawson Street, was opened in 1882. At the mother-house, which they call Mary Mount, is a big boarding-school. A very advanced type of education is given here. The nuns don't by any means confine themselves to the accomplishments which used long ago to be considered as the one thing needful for a generation finicking in mind and weak in body. A sound mind and a sound body are aimed at in the nuns' system. They have a kindergarten attached for the little children, a Sloyd-room for their elders, where they are taught not only housewifely cooking, but

also painting and papering, printing with the aid of a fine printing-press, and half a dozen other useful things, and the Sloyd-room is daily increasing its scope. At recreation there are tricycles for the youngsters, as well as tennis and all the other games, and the small children delve their little gardens with wonderful energy. Loretto, Ballarat, has its monthly magazine, *Eucalyptus Blossoms*, written and edited by the school-children, and a bright little journal it is.

At the Dawson Street house there are most efficient day-schools, where they prepare girls for the university and highest competitive examinations. A Training College for Teachers, the staff of which was provided without thought of expense so long as the best could be got, helps the nuns here. The college is in the convent grounds. There is an immense free school here, and another at Redan, a mining settlement to which the nuns go, returning afterwards, as there is only a school-house.

Attached to the Ballarat convents there is, besides a flourishing Society of Children of Mary, a Ladies' Association of Charity. This is not held to so strait a path spiritually as the Children of Mary, whose rules are like those of nuns in the world, but they are expected to carry out the corporal works of mercy generously. They are organised like the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The good they do in Ballarat is incalculable. They visit the sick and poor in public institutions and in their homes. They are a relief

committee, collecting money and meeting regularly to hear appeals for help. They provide food, clothes, lodgings, and, through brothers, sons, or husbands, very often situations for those out of work. They are about to take on visiting the prisons, and looking after the Catholic children of the Industrial Schools. The Children of Mary have charge of the altars and altar linen, and the vestments of the various churches. The nuns have also an association for poor girls and women. It numbers some four hundred members, and in its respective divisions, one for married women, one for young girls, it gives help and sympathy, both spiritual and temporal.

In 1884 a convent was established in Portland, on the shores of the Southern Ocean. In 1889 a little colony migrated to Melbourne. Of these I have only space to say that where they are they are little centres of light and leading, and that immense good results from them.

Canada, after India, is the land where exiled Loretto has most multiplied. Five nuns left Rathfarnham in 1847, the black year of the Irish famine, for Toronto. As long ago Irish saints spread the gospel of Christ in heathen places, so in latter days, when nuns are needed, Colonial Bishops seem to look instinctively towards Ireland. They went away in heavy sadness, meeting in the mourning streets of Dublin the great public funeral of O'Connell, whose magnificent meetings a few years ago, pointed so little to such a day of visita-

tion as this. They were six weeks crossing the ocean, with little incident, except a jolly and swearing captain, who made meal-hours a series of electric shocks for the nuns by his unconscious explosions. Arrived at New York, they rested a little, and then took the steamer along the Hudson to Albany. From Albany to Rochester was by rail, and a cold and trying journey they found it. Then they steamed again on Lake Ontario, and reached Toronto on the morning of September 16, 1847.

Poor nuns! imagine their misery when there was no one to meet them! The Bishop, who was so urgent for their coming, put in no appearance. They were as helpless as birds lost from a beloved cage, and stood a while shy and wretched, jostled and commented upon by every rude and ignorant passer-by. At last they summoned up courage to call a coach, and ask to be driven to the Bishop's house. Arrived there, he came to them, kind and fatherly and full of apologies, but with a pallor on his ruddy cheeks and a fear lowering in his eyes. He soon broke the trouble to them. The city was a very nest of malignant typhus, "emigrant fever," imported by the famine-stricken creatures fleeing from Ireland. At that moment two of his priests were dying within a few steps of them. That summer eighty-four ships had put into the St. Lawrence, and were kept in quarantine at Grove Isle, every one of them saturated with typhus. Ten thousand Irish dead were buried at Grove Isle before the 1st of November in

that year. The plague had spread like wildfire through the Canadian cities, till the Dominion was literally plague-stricken. In Toronto the Bishop and one priest, far gone in consumption, were the only two ecclesiastics still unstricken, and they were exhausted attending to the fever-stricken in the long stretch of sheds outside the city.

However, the nuns were not likely to reproach him for bringing them into danger. In a few days they were established in their convent at Duke Street. At first all went well. Many persons of standing called on the nuns to welcome them, and when the schools were opened, placed their children there. But a great trouble awaited the nuns in the death of the Bishop, which took place in a very little time. He had taken the fever in the sheds, and had been dying on his feet for some time, during which he had been setting the affairs of the diocese in order, and attending the sick to the last hours he was able.

Sorrow followed sorrow for the nuns. There was no one in Canada really responsible for them, or to whom it mattered much whether they should sink or swim, now the Bishop was gone. Illness came; within three years the Superior was dead, and two of her nuns, one from a horrible gangrene in her foot, poor soul, and her sufferings must have almost broken her Sisters' hearts. The little community was so broken up and weakly, that after the Superior's death, and the appointment of Mother Teresa Dease in her stead, they

disbanded their schools for a few months. In this interval for rest Mother Teresa fell ill. She went to Niagara for change of air, and returned much better. In September of that year 1851, two nuns from Rathfarnham having reinforced them, they opened the schools again, at first with little result, for the pupils came back with depressing slowness. But after a time things brightened. Half-a-dozen postulants came, and by-and-by they opened the poor-schools, which of course were soon thronged. Pupils flowed in by degrees to the paying school, and after they had removed to a better house in Bathurst Street, and away from the mournful suggestions of the old house, they gradually became established in prosperity.

Mother Teresa had the true foundress spirit. As early as 1853 she sent out a little colony to Brentford, which in time removed to London, a busy and rising town of 5000 people. After a time, from causes too long to be gone into, this too was given up. The first permanent foundation was made at Guelph in the June of 1856. Guelph throve extraordinarily. Schools and noviciate alike gathered in many inmates, and the Germans and Irish of the place were so generous to the nuns that for the first few years of their time their living cost them but little. The next permanent foundation was at Niagara in 1861. A convent at Belleville, established in 1857, was removed, for some reason, after a time of trial, but later on was re-established. Hamilton was the next foundation. This was

in the midst of a very Protestant community. Of course the nuns met some opposition, but also great and unexpected kindness. Here, as everywhere else in Canada, the Protestants sent their daughters in numbers to the nuns' school. A very distinguished Protestant clergyman set the example in this, and another dying soon after, left a proviso in his will that his girls were to go to the convent school.

In 1867, the community at Toronto having far outgrown the capacity of their convent, a splendid house and estate called Lyndhurst was bought by the nuns. It had been the home of the most magnificent of fine ladies, and the scene of entertainments to attend which gave one a *cachet*. They call this splendid house "The Abbey" now, and it has a beautiful church, examination hall, and various other buildings added.

Lindsay and Stratford were the last foundations in Canada. Later a convent was founded in Joliet, Illinois, and perhaps even Sir John M'Donald would not object to this federation between Canada and the States.

Mother Teresa Dease died on July 1, 1889, and is buried at Niagara. The picture I have of her shows a high-bred, fair face. She came of a noble family, and she looks her descent from generations of honourable living and high thinking. Her sister was Superioress of Fermoy Convent, and her family is yet well and nobly represented in the Loretto Order.

As far back as 1844, Mother Teresa Ball, at the

urgent request of the Rev. Dr. Collier, soon afterwards created Bishop of Mauritius, sent eight of her nuns to found a convent at Port Louis. Mauritius has a considerable Catholic population, the descendants of old French colonists, and also the Irish soldiers and their families. Things went so well at Port Louis that the nuns are in the happy position of having no story to tell. They are established at Richeterre, a magnificent house, with eighty acres of land, and their schools of every kind are always well filled. They have a second foundation, Curepipe, equally satisfactory.

Gibraltar was a mission Mother Xaveria specially loved. The first detachment of nuns reached the Rock in 1845, and was received with ringing of bells from the Cathedral and a parade of soldiers drawn up in the streets by command of the Governor, who paid the nuns a visit of ceremony almost immediately on their landing. The Loretto nuns in their foreign settlements have many such acts of kindness and honour to record on the part of English and Protestant authorities. Dr. Hughes, the Bishop, returned to Ireland soon after their arrival, and his successor fixed them in their beautiful convent known as Our Lady of Europa, because the nuns had for some time in their keeping a miraculous statue of Our Lady. Europa flourished much, and in 1882 the schools had so vastly extended that it was found necessary to make a new foundation. Mother Xaveria did not hesitate when

she heard the need. Money and help were cheerfully given, and while the nuns settled themselves as best they could in one unsuitable house after another, she kept sending alleviations and comforts from home which made them far more endurable. Still they suffered greatly from the climate and the stuffy rooms, till at last they secured a suitable house. They have now, in addition to their own almost over-crowded schools, the charge of the Government schools.

I have spoken before of the Spanish foundation at Puerto. Not long before Mother Xaveria's death this convent was transferred to Seville, where, hard by the home of Hernando Cortes, the nuns are established in a palacio looking out on the lovely Andalusian country, with gardens round about, and the generous Spanish cluster-roses covering the walls and looking in at every window.

Africa also has its Loretto nuns, in the little convent at Pretoria, founded in 1878.

And now I close my sketch of the Irish branch of that great tree which on the Continent has more than a hundred shoots. Seventy years is a little time in the history of the world, yet it has sufficed to do great things in the story of the Order which Frances Ball transferred to Ireland in 1822, and which was so faithfully commanded after her by Mother Scholastica Somers and Mother Xaveria Fallon.

"On this side of the grave was suffering, toil,
Probation, and a great desire unslaked;

On that side, happy virgins pour the oil,
Brimming their lamps, at midnight hour awaked
By the glad cry, 'The Bridegroom comes in haste!'
Rise up then, lovely Bride, and hold Him fast!

This Bride hath in her white gown's folds, as once
A queen of old, red roses rich and sweet,
And purple ripened under burning suns,
Rich as the stains wherewith His blessed feet
Stained all the way uphill the sand and sward.
These are Earth's joys foregone to give her Lord.

After the toil, and suffering, and desire,
And patience, and the death in life long-borne,
Who would recall her who hath flown up higher,
Beyond the gold and pearly gates of morn?
Sleep, sweet, dear soul! Wake up, O blessed Bride,
Beyond your dearest dreaming satisfied!".

THE END.

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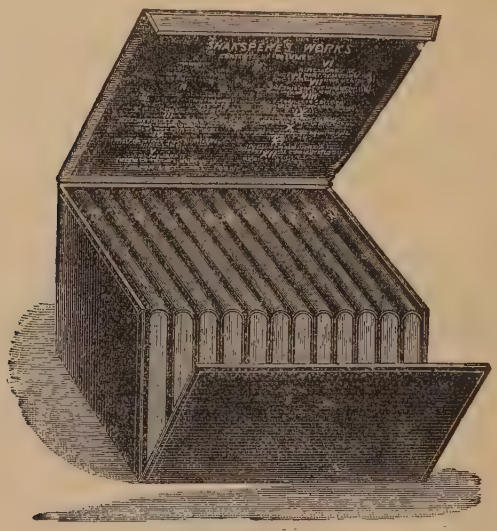

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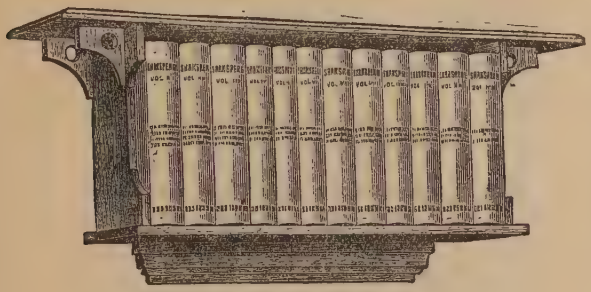

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Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;
And other of such vinegar aspect

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